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There She Blows!

By

James Cooper Wheeler

THE CASK WAS FLUNG FIFTY FEET ALOFT.

See Chapter XIV.

THERE SHE BLOWS!

A WHALING YARN

BY

JAMES COOPER WHEELER

Author of "Captain Pete of Puget Sound," etc.

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THOMAS MORRISON, NOW LIVING IN NEW BEDFORD, STILL FEARLESS AND LOYAL, THO' MANY YEARS OLDER THAN WHEN HE AND THE AUTHOR OF "THERE SHE BLOWS" WERE SHIPMATES ON THE AVOLA

TO THE READER

FIFTY or sixty years ago Whaling was a great Industry, and hundreds of vessels manned by thousands of sea-faring men, as fearless and efficient as those described in these pages, pursued Leviathan to the very boundaries of the globe. To-day it is a thing of the Past. One occasionally hears of a lonely whaleship in the arctic seas, or of whales being caught from stations on shore and shot to death with cannons, but the heroic pursuit of the olden times is dead.

Whalers were a breed of seadog differing from the present type of sailorman as much as a Collie does from an Upland Scotch stag hound, and while I freely admit the present generation to be in many ways an improvement on their predecessors of fifty years back, I maintain that the men who sailed out of New Bedford, Nantucket, and Sag Harbor in the *forties* possessed a toughness of sinew and energy of mind it would be difficult to parallel in the present era.

"There She Blows" is, of course, not absolutely true, but there is not an incident in the tale that might not have occurred without contravening the Law of Nature. And the detail is accurate as a picture taken with a camera. Captain Bourne did exist, and was one of the best men that ever walked a quarter deck. Joe Stoddard was killed while attacking a whale twenty years ago. The rest of the crew of the Avola, with the exception of hearty Tom Morrison and the author, have every one passed away.

A part of the story of Sacred Ben was originally published in "The Independent," and the International Whale Chase was published in "The Youth's Companion" several years ago. My thanks are hereby tendered to them for their courtesy in permitting me to use the material in this connection.

And a last word, dear reader. Pray do not scan these pages for literary merit. I have not aimed for it. The tale possessed me and whirled me along from start to finish so swiftly I could scarcely pause to put in stops, and make paragraphs. I hope you will enjoy the reading as much as I did the writing!

JAMES COOPER WHEELER.

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THE CASK WAS FLUNG FIFTY FEET ALOFT . . *Frontispiece*

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THERE SHE BLOWS

A WHALING YARN

CHAPTER ONE

WHEN I arrived in New Bedford I found the bark Avola, Captain Zenas Bourne, was to clear for a three years' voyage in the South Pacific, the following morning. The vessel was outfitted by the firm of Woodward Brothers, and I made for their store. The room I entered seemed a sort of warehouse filled with coils of rope, and all sorts of marine supplies were piled around, while from hooks in the walls and ceiling hung sea boots, and oil-skins.

A smallish, wiry man with sea-beaten, craggy face was talking to a well-dressed gentleman I took to be Mr. Woodward. I felt in my bones that the other was Captain Zenas Bourne, so I stepped to the railing that divided the room, and when he turned and glared at me, said:

"Are you Captain Bourne?"

"Yes. What do you want?"

I don't believe he meant to be brusk, or knew that he was so. The habit of the quarter-deck, that of a life-time, had formed his manners, and he carried them ashore and afloat. He eyed me keenly as I told him:

"I hear the Avola is to sail on a three years' cruise to-morrow, and I'd like a berth in her."

At this point he suddenly reached over the railing, and seized my hand. He turned the palm up, and scrutinized it:

"Well, I'm blowed!" he grunted at the end of his investigation. "It looks as if you had done some work! What do you want to go sperm whaling for? What's your name, and where do you hail from?"

"Ed Hall, sir, and I was born on Long Island."

"Humph! What are you going to sea for? Done anything wrong, and running away?"

My temper is a little short at times, and it really seemed Captain Bourne was going further than he had any right, for I was not his sailor—yet. So I said:

"I am twenty-six years old, and my own

master, and it's nobody's business but my own why I go to sea."

Instead of getting angry, the old boy grinned at this, and inquired:

"What do you expect to do aboard the Avola? Know anything about ship work?"

I answered pretty earnestly:

"You're mistaken, captain, if you think I will not be worth my grub. I can work hard, and pull a good oar although I'm not a sailor-man."

"Well," said the old skipper gruffly, "You may have some good stuff under your skin. That bulldog jaw of yours looks like it. I'll ship you as a green hand, and give you the two-hundredth lay in the voyage. Here are the articles. Sign them now. You ship for three years not to exceed five. You can buy your kit here, and it will be charged against your lay. Do you know what to get? No? Then I'll help rig you out now."

I had found favor in the old man's eyes, and to tell the truth, he suited me pretty well, too. He picked me out a donkey, or sea-chest, and I stowed it with a judicious selection of sea-going apparel and necessaries. He added a

single mattress, and pair of gray blankets, and announced that I was ready for the voyage.

"And, by the way," he added, "you'd better borrow a wheelbarrow from Mr. Woodward, and take your dunnage down to the ship now. I'll go with you and pick you out a bunk. If you wait till morning those Geezers (Anglice: Portuguese) that I've shipped for'ard will get to windward of you, and leave you the worst quarters in the fo'k's'l."

I was taken aback by the rapidity with which Captain Bourne carried things along, as well as inclined to be complimented by what was surely unusual interest in the personal affairs of a prospective foremast hand. But I managed not to lose my head, and trundled the wheelbarrow behind him to the wharf. The Old Man hailed the ship-keeper, and he and I took my outfit to the forecastle, which was between decks in the bow of the Avola. Two rows of bunks built onto the skin of the vessel extended around the room. The captain pointed out the lower one in front of the scuttle, and right amidships:

"There!" he ejaculated, "that's the best bunk for'ard, and you'll have to fight to hold on

when the Geezers find a green hand has made fast to it."

"All right, sir, I can scrap," I said.

He looked at me with what I am sure was appreciation in his shrewd, old, gray eyes, and remarked:

"Well, you will have to whether you can, or not. Now, have you got money for your supper and bed? You'll get breakfast aboard after we're under way."

"Yes, sir," I answered. "I'm all right, and I'll be aboard at daylight in the morning."

Captain Zenas Bourne rolled up the street, and left me to take care of myself. I leaned against a post, and watched him pass out of sight with a feeling in my heart, that whatever might befall, that old man and I were going to be good friends.

I was down at dawn the next morning, and the dock alongside the Avola already began to swarm with those interested in the sailing of the whale ship. Captain Bourne, and his officers, the first, second, third, and fourth mates, were among the first. Then the sailors began to string along, a motley crowd, some carrying their kits in round-bottomed canvas bags on

their shoulders, and others wheeling their donkeys on barrows borrowed from their boarding masters. Most of them were Portuguese, of all shades of complexion from jet black to light orange. Although the Old Man recognised me with an approving nod, I felt rather as though I was in a foreign country. However, when the whole crew had arrived, I found of the twenty individuals who composed it, one fifth, or four of us were Americans. There was an old Yankee sea dog, a young fellow from Vermont, a stalwart darky from one of the Southern states, and myself.

Shortly after sun-up the mate took charge of the deck, and men were sent aloft on the yards to loosen the sails; then as the Avola's fasts were cast off from the wharf, her canvas was sheeted home. The second mate stood at the wheel until she was fairly under way when one of the able seamen was called to take it. After a half hour in which all hands labored to reduce the chaotic confusion about the decks into something like order, the whole crew was summoned to the quarter deck, and lined up on the leeward side. This was for the purpose of separating us into the starboard and port watches. The captain is supposed to head the

starboard watch, and the first mate the port, although, as a matter of fact, the captain does not stand any watch, the second mate performing this part of his duty. A whaler's crew is divided into boats-crews as well as watches, and when the ceremony was through I found Jonas, the Yankee sailor, and I were both in the starboard watch, while Barker, the Vermonter, and George the darky were in the mate's division. The Old Man, who also nominally headed the starboard boat's crew—although he was not expected to lower except in emergencies—picked me to pull the after oar.

After these preliminaries were arranged the starboard watch was allowed to go to breakfast, and here I had a new experience. We went below, and prepared for the meal by getting out our tin pots and pans. Shortly, Slush, the cook, came forward to the forecastle with a bucket on each arm. One of the Portuguese sailors, a giant of a fellow, picked up a small wooden tub from behind the steps and standing directly under the hatch allowed Slush to fill it from his buckets. I was on my donkey in front of my bunk, pot and pan ready, and watched what ensued with great interest.

Jonas sat on his chest next me, and also looked on apparently in some discontent at the readiness of the big dago, whose name was Anton. I must describe Jonas more particularly so you will better understand the events which took place in a short time.

He was of the traditional Yankee type; sallow-faced, with features which might have been shaved to an edge with a draw knife. His keen, wintry, blue eyes twinkled with humorous intelligence, and lit up his quaint countenance. In figure he was one of those tall, spindly-looking New Englanders who are so deceptive in appearance. With his narrow and sloping shoulders he seemed a fit subject for consumption, and who was to guess that his chest was deep and thick, and his trunk round as a barrel, while his seemingly fragile limbs had the strength and elasticity of tempered steel. I had seen all sorts in the gymnasiums in New York, and divined something of the real man under the covering of his uncouthness, but to the dagoes the Yankee was a weakling—and according to forecastle ethics—a good subject for imposition.

The meal consisted of a large chunk of salt beef, and about half a bushel of potatoes boiled

with their skins on. A box one foot high and two long called the bread barge, was filled with hard tack, and completed the repast. Anton, the big Portuguese, was evidently regarded a man of weight among his shipmates. At any rate, he assumed the leadership in forecastle matters from the beginning, as was shown by his so promptly getting out the mess kid—the small tub which serves as a platter—and receiving the food from the cook. As I found out afterward, each watch ordinarily agrees on a leader who is called "Captain of the forecastle," and among his other functions is that of partitioning the meals delivered, so to speak, in bulk by Slush.

In short, Anton without qualifying had taken upon himself the running of the forecastle affairs of the watch, and the assumption was approved by the rest of his compatriots. Jonas knew, and realised all this, but although I saw something was out of gear, I had only a dim conception of the situation. But when Anton had cut all the eatable portion of the beef from the joint, and divided it among the other Geezers and himself, and handed over the remnants of gristle and bone to Jonas and me, I was perfectly ready to back the Yankee

in the measures he promptly took to reorganize the dago plan of campaign. He looked at me inquiringly, and I suppose my face satisfied him, for without more ado, or a word of explanation he reached over, and calmly exchanged the contents of Anton's plate for the bare bone allotted to him. The Portuguese was so paralysed by the impudence of this unlooked for action that for a second he made no motion of remonstrance, sitting in amazement at the temerity of this insignificant-looking heretic. But the eyes of his countrymen were upon him, and he realised he must establish his supremacy on the spot, or be unable forever after.

He put down his plate, and the next moment his huge black fingers closed around Jonas' scrawny throat. As he felt the clutch, Jonas delivered the blow called an "upper cut" by boxers, and caught Anton full on the square point of his black chin. The Yankee's blow was given with such unexpected and surprising strength that the form of the giant Portuguese struck the deck shoulders first. The next instant the other seven dagoes piled onto the Yankee. I had begun to comprehend what Jonas' inquiring look at me meant, and it did

not take long for me to get into the battle. In fact, I succeeded in stopping two of our assailants before they reached my ally. The first one I got a full swing at, and hit him so hard under the ear that he went over almost as limply as Anton. The second got hold of me before I had a chance to strike, but I butted him full in the face, and he sat down on a donkey, and tried to hide his head in his arms.

And now Jonas started to work, and it was evident he was an artist. The first fellow who got to him he grasped below the hips, and with a quick swing catapulted him over his head, and into the bunk behind. This man did not attempt to come out again during the scrimmage, and this only left us four to deal with. Two of them, however, were cunning enough to drop, and seize the Yankee's knees and feet, and I knew that the others would have kicked him the instant he was down. I did my best to stop that game by giving the biggest a tremendous crack in the eye that must have made him see a good many stars, for he hallooed out something in Portuguese, and started up the scuttle steps to the deck. It did not appear to make any difference to Jonas whether he was standing up, or lying down; he apparently

fought just as viciously in one posture as the other, and the way he mauled those two poor dagoes who had thought they were going to get him at their mercy, was surprising. At last he got an opportunity he had been manœuvring for, and gave the most troublesome one a kick in the stomach that hurled him senseless against the after bulkhead.

The fight was over, although I could hardly realise it. It had not taken two minutes for us to whip the whole watch, for the ones who remained capable, had no desire to continue hostilities. Now I became aware for the first time that the hatchway was filled with excited faces. The next instant they all melted away, and the rock-hewn features of Captain Bourne appeared. After squinting down, he called out sharp and stern:

"Below there! Are you through scrapping?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" replied Jonas and I simultaneously.

"Then pile out here, the starboard watch! I want to see you all aft."

CHAPTER TWO

THE starboard watch filed aft, and paraded on the lee quarter. We did not look as shipshape as half and hour before. Jonas and I, except that our clothing was in rags, turned up all right, but it was easy to see that the Portuguese were in bad shape. The Old Man walked down the line scrutinizing each individual keenly until he had thoroughly mastered the condition of affairs. He considered a moment while we stood uncomfortably watching him. Then he began to speak:

"Men," he said, and his voice had a ring of absolute authority I had not heard before. "You've begun this cruise with a good-sized scrap among yourselves, but I am not going to growl about it. I like a good fight myself. It's all right down in the forecastle, and lets out the bad blood. It must not come on deck. If it does, I'll take a hand, and you will find I can keep the ball rolling pretty swift—if you start it going. One more word before you go forward. I said I like a scrap, but"—here he

glared up and down the line, "you must do your fighting fair and sailor-like! I won't have seven or eight of you piling on one. It seems to me something of that sort happened this morning, but you dagoes got all you called for, and it served you right. Go forward!"

Away we went, Jonas and I in the lead, chuckling to ourselves over this taste of the Old Man's quality. There was no doubt that fight, and his speech on top of it, made my existence in the forecastle very different from what it might have been. The watch resumed its interrupted meal. One of the Portuguese voluntarily shared his liberal portion of beef with me, and Anton nibbled meekly at the bone the doughty Yankee had dispensed as his share.

This was the beginning of my friendship with Jonas. He promised he would take charge of my nautical education, and teach me all about the rigging, and how to box the compass so that in a week or so I would know as much as the average run of ordinary seamen. And while we are on this subject I must describe the Avola to you.

She was bark-rigged, that is, she had three masts like a ship, but the fore and main masts

carried square sails while the mizzen was fitted with fore and aft canvas like a schooner. She was a very old hull, and had originally been in the West India trade, but forty or fifty years before had been caught in a hurricane, and all the sticks blown out of her. The hulk had been bought by some enterprising New Bedford man, and, after refitting, turned into a whaler. She was said to be soaked with sperm oil from stem to stern, and that preserved her from falling to pieces with dry rot, like the "One Hoss Shay" Doctor Holmes described about the time the Avola must have been built. For the rest, she was blunt-bowed, and no sailor, but comfortable in a sea way. She carried four whaleboats, and it took our large crew to man them all. The whaling craft of those days scorned such devices as patent blocks, and double topsails, or the more modern donkey engine to help out in the heavy drags, but put their reliance on the number of the crew, and main strength. To wind up she was of 373 tons burden.

What was rare even in those days the old hooker had a flush deck from the taffrail to the chocks in the bow only interrupted by the try works abaft the foremast, and the galley

further aft, and Jonas told me that if she had a topgallant forecastle and poop deck, she could not have sailed a knot an hour in a fair gale, and the best she could do now was not over six. He said she had been built by the mile, and sawed off to order.

We had a brisk and steady breeze that allowed us to lay our course, and all hands were kept on deck the balance of the day to stow the loose odds and ends in place, and get things in shipshape order. I stuck close to Jonas, and picked up all the information I could. Whenever we had a leisure moment, which was not often, he coached me on the names of the ropes that hung and trailed everywhere. He was an A. B. himself; and as I found out afterward, could have dismantled the bark and set up her rigging taut as ever, and not been puzzled by the problem. He told me he hailed from Gloucester and had worked with the fishing fleet as a boy, afterwards sailing deep water out of New York for some years. Then when he had got a taste of blubber hunting, he had never been able to detach himself from it.

I became acquainted with the officers during the day, and I may as well describe them, for you will often meet them. The mate was a

tall, well-built man of thirty years. Jonas told me he had the reputation of being as good a seaman as ever slapped the deck with his foot, but he had a bad temper. One voyage he had been promoted to master through the accidental death of the captain, and had used his crew so badly he had been imprisoned when he brought the ship into port. The Yankee thought we were as well off not to be in his watch, as he was apt to make trouble with his men.

"However," concluded Jonas, "the Old Man will attend to him if he gets gay. They don't none of 'em want to fall foul of old uncle Zene!"

I looked up as he called the captain by this name, and the Yankee laughed at my puzzled expression, and explained that was his common nickname ashore and afloat.

Mr. Stoddard, the second mate, who headed our watch, was a man of different make-up. He weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds, and appeared fat, but he was in reality a mass of brawn and muscle, and wonderfully spry for his size. He was said to be one of the best whalemen in the fleet, and a good fellow in every way.

The third officer was Mr. Fletcher, a darky,

and an efficient sailor-man. Mr. Morrison, a Blue-nose from Nova Scotia, winds up the roll as fourth mate. I came to know him very well later on, and he was a man to tie to.

At two o'clock, four bells shipboard time, Captain Bourne called out to me as I stood with Jonas forward of the try works:

"Lay aft here, you, Ned!" was what he said, and his tone left no doubt on my mind he meant me to come on the run. That was what I did, and when I reached the wheel where he was standing, he said as peremptorily to Big Anton who had the trick:

"Go forward, you!"

The Portuguese dropped the spokes as if they were red hot, and went as rapidly as I had come.

"Now, you Long Island greeny," said Uncle Zene, "I'm going to give you a lesson in steering. Can you box the compass?"

"No, sir," I replied, "but I'll be able to this time to-morrow."

"See that you do," he growled good-naturedly. "Well, never mind the compass to-day then. Do you see the corner of that sail?" and he indicated it with his gnarled old forefinger. "That's the weather clew of the mainsail. You

keep it lifting. Feel her with the spokes! A little more to starboard! I suppose you know starboard means right, you numskull? Now to port! Keep feeling her!"

And so he kept on to my surprise and gratitude, in a gruff, authoritative way, but with a direct clearness that soon gave me confidence. I caught on so quickly that his grim features became quite amicable, and at last he condescended to say as though he was admitting too much:

"You're a good deal of a lubber, Ned, but I guess after awhile we'll manage to make a sailor-man of you. Who started that scrap down below this morning? And what was it about?"

He sprung these two questions at me as a cat pounces on a mouse. I hesitated one moment, but reflecting that it could not do anybody any harm, I related the story exactly as it occurred. He listened with interest, and nodded in a satisfied way when I had finished.

"Yes," he commented, "that's about how I thought it happened. That Jonas seems to be a pretty handy man, don't he? You have *got* to keep your end up at sea. If you don't, you go up yourself. You tie to Jonas, and learn the

ropes as soon as you can. Go aloft every chance you get, and don't be on the hind rattlin. Now get forward to your work again, and send Anton aft to the wheel."

Mr. Morrison and the Yankee were working together making a long splice as I carried my message to Anton, and the former called me to them:

"What was the Old Man saying to you, Ned? Do you know, you kind of favor him," he added, looking at me curiously, "same gray eyes, and long, undershot chin! What did he say?"

"He seemed to be curious about the scuffle in the forecastle," I answered. "And I told him the whole story."

"That's what you want to do if he asks you anything," remarked the fourth mate, who seemed to know and appreciate uncle Zene. "He won't question you if it ain't right."

"I am sure of that," I replied heartily. "He's a good man!"

"None better!" agreed Morrison and Jonas.

CHAPTER THREE

I FOUND the Avola was to run to about the latitude of the Western Islands, and then south, parallel to the eastern coast of Africa. Things quieted down the first week we were at sea, and we had no more such lively days as the first one out of port. Everything was snugged up and stowed away, and the men made the acquaintance of each other and the officers, and, in short, we got into running order just like any other machine. We had good weather too, although this was the month of October, and we were, Mr. Morrison told me, liable to run into a gale any time.

Masthead lookouts were sent aloft before we were fairly out of sight of the dock, and the second day I stood my trick at the fore-royal with Jonas. This was an experience that took me some time to get accustomed to. A heavy rope becket the size of a man's body is made fast to the butt of the royal mast, the height of your waist above the futtock shrouds and the lookout stands with his feet upon the latter, and

his body through the former, about ninety feet above the deck. It may seem perfectly calm down below, but when you are up there the slightest whisper of breeze roars like a tempest in the ears of the green hand. And then the motion! Possibly only a gentle see-saw on deck but at the royal masthead you sway in an arc thirty or forty feet wide, and when there is really a heavy sea on, it takes a seasoned sailor to stand it. I was never a bit qualmish—as far as sea-sickness goes—from the beginning, but I confess I spent a dizzy and uncomfortable two hours there the first time I did masthead duty. Afterwards I became so used to it that I really enjoyed the swing from starboard to port. And the outlook was magnificent. It was the first time I ever got a full and satisfactory idea of the ocean, although I had often seen it from the shore, being a Long Islander. But hanging up there in mid air with our boat the only speck on that waste of living water, was a sight to remember and make you feel pretty small and lonely. As masthead duty is of vital importance on a whaling ship, two officers also stand lookout at the main royal, so there are always during the daylight four sharp pairs of eyes on the watch for Leviathan if he

shows his head—or rather his hump—above water.

It happened I was the first on board the Avola to "raise whales," as sighting them from the masthead is termed. We were ten days out and the weather looked threatening. As I left the wheel, at which I was now taking my regular trick, to go to my masthead lookout, I heard the Old Man tell Mr. Stoddard that the barometer was falling, and to look out for squalls. Ragged, black clouds were scurrying across the sky, and often shutting out the sun as I climbed the rattlings to the masthead. Jonas came up ahead of me, and as he was settling himself in the bight of the sling he said to me:

"If I know anything about North Atlantic weather we're going to have a nasty bit of a storm before many hours are over."

"I suppose a storm at sea must be exciting," I remarked. "I never saw one."

"Well, you'll see plenty before you're through this voyage, Ned," he returned.

As I gazed about I could perceive that the waves were growing larger and more turbulent, and beginning to break into foam at their crests. As I made this reflection I espied an

unusually big patch of white water about three miles away that did not resemble the other waves, and close beside it there appeared a black spot, and then something that looked like a jet of steam shot into the air. I suspected at once it was a whale, but fearing to sound a false alarm and be laughed at, I pointed it out, and said quietly, though my heart was beating fast:

"Jonas, is that a whale?"

He caught it like a flash, and answered:

"Of course it is! Sing out quick before the officers catch on and get the credit."

"There she blows!" I yelled, and I think the whale must have been deaf if he did not hear me himself.

The next instant the captain who had been below in the cabin, burst out of the after companion way without any coat or hat. In a second he was in the waist, and nearly breaking his neck in the effort to look aloft:

"Who raised them whales?" he hailed.

"Long Island Ned, sir," I called down. That's what he had nicknamed me.

Before he had time to say any more, Mr. Stoddard, at the main, who had got his binoculars to work, began to sing out, and the Old

Man stiffened to an attitude of intense attention:

"Thar she blows! Thar she blows! Thar she blows! Thar she white waters!"

This last was a wailing screech, and the Old Man called, his voice eager as a terrier's whine:

"What do you make of him, Mr. Stoddard? That sounds to me like sperm whale, sir!"

"It's a lone bull, sir! And sperm all right."

"Where away?" demanded the master.

"Two points off the lee bow, sir," returned the second mate.

The captain faced the attentive man at the wheel:

"Let her fall off!" he ordered. "Sing out when we head right, Mr. Stoddard."

"Aye, aye, sir. Steady!" he roared, "steady as she goes!"

And the Avola pointed straight at the lone bull.

"Brace the main yard!" was the captain's next order.

All hands were on deck now, having swarmed up almost as promptly as the skipper, and the yards came home with a swing. Then the halliards were tautened up, and the old

Avola started on her new course as fast as she knew how.

"Steer small!" admonished uncle Zene as he reached into the companion rack for the spy glass to which he clung in preference to the more modern binoculars. He adjusted its lanyard around his sinewy neck, and mounted the main rigging to the masthead like an active boy. The whale disappeared now, and Jonas said he had sounded, but would come to the surface again before long. I held my breath and searched that stretch of black water as though I was looking for gold. Again I was the lucky one—I guess I had the best eyes —and I caught the black spot and the mist spray of the spout before the others:

"Thar she blows! Thar she blows! Thar she blows!"

"Sperm whale!" yelled the Old Man. "Go below you mastheads! Stand by to lower the boats!"

I was jumping with excitement, and the blood seemed to be running up and down my backbone as if a faucet was turned on in my head. For once I was quicker than Jonas, and I was out of my becket and getting down the rigging as though the rattlings were

greased. When I struck the deck, I made for the after house on the keen run, with Jonas close behind. Tom Morrison the fourth mate, who headed the boat, was already there, and as we arrived, he and Fayal Joe the boatsteerer—harpooneer he is called in books—had the painted canvas cover off the boat, and were lifting the tubs of whale line into her:

"Where's your bread and water, Ned?" he snarled.

Not that he meant to be ugly, but at this supreme moment nobody stopped to oil phrases, and besides, as after oarsman, it was my place to fill a small canvas sack with hardtack, and a keg with water which was taken along as a precaution in case of the boat being accidentally kept from returning to the ship. That was the secret of my haste in coming from aloft, and without a word of reply except "Aye, aye, sir!" I seized the bag and keg, and dropped to the deck to fill them. I put the keg under the faucet of the water butt, and set it running, and then filled my breadsack, so that the two operations were going on at once. Not only I, but every member of the crew seemed to be shod with quicksilver, and in an incredibly short period of time the boats were ready to

go in the water, and their crews stood by them awaiting the next word from the captain.

This detail that is so long to describe did not probably take over five minutes, but you must remember that all the time the Avola was bowling down the wind toward the whale, and he was headed our way, so that in what seemed a breath of time, the Old Man's voice came down from aloft:

"Below there?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" answered the mate.

"Stand by to lower away. Lower away!"

The men at the boat tackles bowsed, the boats were pushed overboard as they swung free; the boatsteerer leaped in the bow to attend to unhooking the tackle, and the officer into the stern sheets.

"Surge on those falls!" was the order.

The boats fell smoothly and swiftly to the surface of the water, the others members of the crew scrambled over the side, and in some miraculous way got safely on their thwarts. They were not permitted to enter the boat before it was afloat because these cockleshells are built of the flimsiest material, and it is only through the wonderful seamanship of the whalers they endure the work they are forced

to go through. The weight of the full crew in the craft while it was swinging in the air would buckle her up and take out the bottom.

I was on my thwart facing the fourth mate about as soon as anybody, though I nearly went overboard getting there.

"Pull all!" he ordered, as he passed the loom of his steering oar through the becket that gave him his purchase. We dropped our oars in the water, and in a few strokes left the ship behind:

"Avast pulling!" sung out Morrison. "Get out that mast, and step it!"

The boat mast with the sail furled to it is kept in the stern sheets with the butt end under the after thwart, and the other projecting astern. The tub oarsman, Jonas, who was next to me, and I got it out in a jiffy. It was passed forward, and through the hole in the bow thwart into the cleat at the keel of the boat. The next instant the gaskets were cast off, the sheet passed aft to the fourth mate, and as the halliards were tautened, the sail caught the wind. The boat started ahead like a skittish horse, but Morrison was not satisfied with our rate of speed, and—

"Pull all!" was the order.

Out came the ash blades in the rowlocks again, and we swept over the wave like an albatross. It was hard work and quick, jerky pulling, for the impetus that the sail gave made me look out pretty sharp that I did not catch a crab. I recognised the danger even before the fourth mate said calmly:

"Long Island Ned, if you catch a crab, I'll knock your head off!"

Beyond that possibility the consequences would have been dire, I being the after oarsman. I think Morrison just meant to brace me up with the threat, although he was a very earnest man, and little given to fooling when he had business on hand.

The boatsteerer pulls the forward oar in the whaleboat, and it being his duty to throw the harpoon, he thus becomes the harpooner. On board ship he is called the boatsteerer because after he has made fast to the whale with the harpoon, or "iron," he comes to the stern, and steers the boat, while the officer occupies his station forward, and kills the whale with the lance. Fayal Joe, a Portuguese from the Azores, steered the starboard boat. He was a tall, long-geared chap, and I had heard it was his first voyage in that capacity.

In rowing we had our backs to the whale, and as no one under Morrison's eye considered it healthy to look over his shoulder, we could not see how quickly we were coming on the quarry. But the fourth mate's face was as plain to read as a telltale compass, and not five feet distant from mine as he stood at his steering oar. His deep blue eyes glowed over the water in front, and his figure crouched as I imagine a wild beast contracts itself before the spring which pulls down its prey. As I watched he set his teeth, and his eyes became like coals, and I knew we were nearing that lone bull. A moment more, and he leaned far forward, as if he were reaching out with his body, and shouted:

"Stand up, Joe!"

Fayal Joe put the end of his oar in the cleat, and rose to his feet in the bow of the boat. As he put his knee in the slot in the fore sheets called the clumsy cleat, he reached over and picked up his "iron," or harpoon, which he had previously laid ready to his hand.

"Peak your oars! Get your paddles!" ordered Morrison.

The result of this order was to bring the crew paddle in hand, sitting on the gunwale

and facing the whale. As I expected there was the bull not fifty yards away and bound past us, broadside on. His huge black head, several feet above the crisping waves, was plainly in sight, and thirty feet further back his hump arose making an inky island in the sea. I did not have time to wonder for the fourth mate said quietly—he was calmer now the climax had arrived:

"Stand by to take in the sail!" He added: "Joe, I'm going to put you right against that fellow."

I had my eye on the boatsteerer's face as he spoke, and I thought I saw a hint of uncertainty in its expression. But if my suspicion were right he must have quickly regained his resolution. It seemed to me we passed those few yards of water that separated the boat and the whale with magical quickness, for in a twinkle as I involuntarily braced my body to withstand the shock of contact, the nose of the boat came with a soft, solid chug against the side of the whale, just abaft the fin. I saw Fayal Joe's long arms sway aloft with the iron, and as the keen point came down piercing the side of the bull, I heard Morrison's steady, authoritative voice, saying:

"Clue up there! Knock that mast down! Steady, lads!"

While this was doing Joe had thrown his second or "preventer iron." We had got the sail rolled and the mast down and stowed, when Morrison's voice came again, and this time with startling emphasis:

"Starn all! Starn all, for your lives!"

CHAPTER FOUR

THE great bull whale, when it felt the prick of the iron, had suddenly arrested his onward course, and a thrill ran through his frame that turned the sea water into foam. Then he began "milling," as the whalers call it, and steadily revolved on his axis, as one might say, until his flukes, twenty feet from corner to corner, came with smooth velocity under the bow of the whaleboat. It was then that the fourth mate gave his warning cry to stern all away from the advancing peril. There was no need to urge us to push hard on our oars. I never worked more willingly in my life than I did right there. Luckily we caught the water together with the blades of our oars, and the light boat glided away from the impending catastrophe as fleetly as a birchen canoe. Even as we drew out of danger that tremendous tail arose with the easy strength of a mighty engine, churning the brine into soap suds, and waved aloft, an immense black signal of distress, almost over our heads.

THUS WE LAY MOORED IN SECURITY, THROUGH THE LIVE-LONG NIGHT.

See Chapter IV.

"Not *this* time!" remarked the cool officer, with a smile at me, as the boat drew still further away. "Ah," he added, "there go flukes!"

The other boats had been outstripped by ours, and were just now coming to the scene when we were "fast," and the whale had gone down. We had scored a clean beat on them and Morrison was in high spirits and smiling at the other officers as they ranged along side. In the meantime the line was sizzling out of the chocks in the bow of our boat, and leading straight down into the sea. The fourth mate had picked up a bight as it ran out of the tub, and thrown a deft turn around the loggerhead in the stern sheets, used as a snubbing post. All hands in the starboard boat sat facing forward, oars peaked, and ready to haul in as soon as the bull completed his perpendicular dive. A whale of this size—Morrison said in high glee he would try out at least a hundred barrels—will frequently remain under water a half hour or even longer before being forced to come to the surface again to breathe. Of course, you know a whale is a full-blooded animal like a hippopotamus or a cow, and must fill its bellows sooner or later, or drown. I sat there and watched the line run out; it whizzed

from the tub to where the fourth mate held it down, now with a round turn about the loggerhead—for more than half had disappeared—and as it smoked away from the tough oak it writhed and curled forward between the oarsmen to the chocks, where Joe stood with an eye on the boat hatchet in case something fouled and it became necessary to cut. As Morrison bore down with more strength that smoothly running line smoked in the chocks as well as at the snubbing post, and the drag of it made the boat fairly *squat* in the water under the tremendous strain. If it snarled as it came out of the flemish coil in the tub, and snared a man in one of those bights, it would snatch him a hundred feet beneath the surface of the deep in the twinkling of an eye—if it had not cut him in two before he reached there. Morrison sat and smiled happily, and bore down harder on the line that seemed to lead straight to perdition—as I realised our peril.

Then to my great relief the whizzing streak began to lead out and away from the nose of the boat. The officer showed his teeth like a school boy at play, and said cheerfully:

"He's coming up, Ned. Now you'll see some fun! Lay aft here, Fayal Joe."

He passed lightly forward on the starboard side of the boat, and Joe came aft on the port. The line was not running so rapidly now, and by the time the fourth mate had his lances laid out for ready use the strain on the boat had ceased. The lances have a blade sharp as a razor, and a wrought iron shank six feet or more long, with a wooden shaft to give grasp to the hand and accuracy to the dart. They are a deadly weapon in the hand of a skilful whaleman, and sometimes a single dart will penetrate to the life of the colossal animal, and send it in its death flurry.

And now as the line became less tense, and led out horizontally, Morrison ordered:

"Haul in the slack, lads!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

The four men ahead of me did the work; it was my duty to coil it down in the stern sheets between me and Fayal Joe, and I was particular that the bights should be laid so they would run out clear in case the bull, as sometimes happened, took a notion to sound again. I made each bight overlap another so it could not foul, and Joe looked on with approval. Morrison was too busy watching for the whale to break water to notice my scrupulous care and any-

how it was not his place but Joe's to attend to this detail.

In came the line, and then I heard a noise like a small dam breaking loose and Joe whispered:

"Thar she breaks water!"

I looked, and saw the green sea creaming over the square snout and wicked jaws of the bull, as it rose from the depths. The upper head, or "junk," as whalemen call it, is a huge mass of flesh in size and shape like a box car, while the lower, which contains a glistening array of big ivory teeth, was comparatively thin. This terrible head reared itself to a height of about twenty feet; then the rest of the body appeared, and it lay before us in full view, not forty feet away. I was glad we were well abaft the fin and nearer the tail than the head. Later I discovered that many blubber hunters prefer to take a whale head on. It did not seem to make any difference to Morrison. He cast a glance at us over his shoulder as he raised his lance, and said softly, as though he were afraid of disturbing, or "galleying" the bull:

"Haul, you sons of guns! Haul hard, now!"

The line came in hand over hand, and I coiled

away like mad, not forgetting to overlay in my haste. Then the officer said:

"Assez! Avast hauling!"

The boat continued to glide ahead; the bull was thirty feet away; twenty! Morrison poised his lance in air and hurled it at the black side of the monster. It struck close behind the fin, sunk through the tough blubber like a sharp knife cutting cheese, and penetrated deep into his vitals. The gigantic frame gave a convulsive shudder, and as a shower of bloody spray came out of his spout hole, Fayal Joe yelled:

"You've got him, sir. You touched his life!"

The fourth mate was hauling back his lance by the thin warp, and viewing the bull contemplatively. Suddenly he passed the lance butt under the harpooneer thwart, and roared as he hastily sat down to the oar:

"Starn all, you blamed fools! Starn all!"

His quick eye had caught some indication, invisible to us, that the whale was going into his flurry, and nothing but his rapid energy saved the bacon of that boat's crew. Promptly as we obeyed the order, we had not driven the boat five lengths before Leviathan apparently stood on his head and swung those flukes around in every direction, with a colossal

strength and mad energy that made a Niagara of the sea, and raised waves almost swamping us as we dug stoutly to increase our distance from this maelstrom bent on annihilating us. Next the monster started an insane race in a circle a hundred yards in diameter, and threshed around with a tumultuous velocity that was even more terrifying than his first performance. We did not waste time, but continued to back water until we finally reached a calmer zone, and then at Morrison's silent gesture, lay on our oars. I don't want to be hifalutin, but there was something tremendous and elemental in that spectacle. This magnificent animal, a hundred feet long, and endowed with physical strength and vitality to roam the illimitable seas unconquered for centuries, wiped out by a handful of New Bedford sailors for the purpose of supplying oil to the lamps of New England farmers. His prodigious power had been overcome in a moment's struggle, and this last Cyclopean exhibition of aimless fury was his dumb protest against the inevitable Law, that all Nature must submit to the dominion of Man.

The dying struggle did not endure long. We

could see his energy failing; his mad rush became slower and slower, and—

"There he goes, belly up!" said the fourth mate.

A last slap on the water with his flukes sent the spray high in air and he rolled over on his back, washing about in the salt surge, a mere carcase to be cut up and tried out at our will.

I began to pay some attention to other things than the whale. In the first place I missed the rest of the boats, and found they were half way between us and the Avola, which lay about four miles to leeward under reefed topsails. They had returned to the ship and left us alone to fight it out, which I suppose was good whaling, but seemed to me very unsympathetic. Now I became aware the weather had changed for the worse. The wind had risen and was howling keenly cold about our ears, while the sky seemed close down upon the face of the waters, and was filled with scurrying clouds that had ragged and wind torn edges, and were of the color of greasy ink. I noted we lay about fifty feet from the dead whale—we had hauled up on the line—and our boat seemed to be in comparatively smooth water, while the surface of

the sea that environed us had become a turbulent mass of foam. Short waves leaped and threw their spiteful crests toward the heavens, and at intervals a mountainous wave would swallow up all the little ones in its rush. The fourth mate had not failed to see all this, and now he said:

"Get for'ard here, Joe. I guess I had better take that steering oar."

The whale boat is only about thirty feet long, and this steering oar projects astern half its length, giving the man who holds it such ready control he can shift the nose of the light craft in a moment to any point of the compass, or in fact, almost turn it on its axis. This is one of the factors of the whaleboat's miraculous seaworthiness; the steadiness and judgment of the man who grips the handle is the other. It never occurred to me to question our safety while Tom Morrison was at the butt of that steering oar, and apparently the rest of the boat crew like me cast the responsibility on him, and did not worry but that he would keep us out of trouble.

Tom did not seem to think there was any unusual call upon his powers, and went right on about his business the same as always. We

pulled up to the carcase and flagged it, that is put a steel-shod pole with a small flag on the other end, into the blubber. This, I took it, was more a point of etiquette than from any fear it would get adrift, and some one else claim it as their prize. Then after another survey of the ship, and the sky to windward, he settled himself comfortably in the stern sheets and remarked to us:

"Well, lads, I reckon we're in for a night of it. I don't calculate the old bark is weatherly enough to beat up to us in this slant of wind, and it looks as if it would blow some harder before long. It's just as well we've got the *slick* of this sperm whale to lie in, for I don't believe the Avola can get to us before morning, if she does then."

This *slick* he mentioned seemed to me like a special interposition of Providence in our behalf, but I knew later that it was a fact always taken advantage of by the hardy whale hunters of the North Atlantic, and often tempted them to lower away when it would have seemed a mad undertaking to less adventurous souls. That huge mass of the whale's body, weighing as nearly as one can estimate from thirty to sixty tons, and coated over all with blubber—

which is nothing more than an integumental tissue filled with almost fluid fat—from six to fifteen inches thick, exudes oily matter enough to still the turbulency of the waves to a great extent. It, the *slick,* covered in the present instance a surface of perhaps a couple of thousand square feet right in the lee of the dead whale, and this was our Port of Safety.

Thus we lay moored in security with the wind shrieking, and occasionally a terrific snow squall howling down upon us, through the live-long night. I did not close my eyes, but some of the crew actually curled up on their thwarts and took catnaps. Morrison's hand never left the loom of the steering oar, but his fostering watchfulness was apparently not needed, for the staunch, well-modelled, honestly-built little craft rode as safely under the lee of the carcase as if it were in a quiet mill pond.

Shortly before dawn the gale moderated, and the air grew colder. The wind, Morrison told me, had shifted several degrees to the northward, and we might look to see the old Avola somewhere in the neighborhood by day break. Then the stars, which had shone fitfully among the clouds, began to grow paler and a mist appeared along the eastern horizon. This kept

growing whiter and extending further around the rim of the heavens, and finally scintillating gold rays shot through its heart. The sky above was tinted as with a slow brush in pink, and at last the upper edge of the sun's disk appeared over the black surface of the ocean and marked a dazzling yellow path on it.

The fourth mate stood up, and shading his eyes with his hand, looked over the whale into the eye of the wind. I rose and followed his glance. Yes! there was the bark bowling merrily along parallel to us, and about a mile and a half away. She was evidently making a long leg and a short one and would reach us on the next tack. She looked mighty comforting to me, and my heart warmed up to the old girl. I guess the others, except Morrison—little experiences of this sort seemed to have no effect on him—felt the same as I did.

CHAPTER FIVE

ALL hands were on deck and ready for work when we got on board again. The first thing of course was to make our capture secure. We in the boat got a fluke chain around its "small," that part of the body next the tail, and passed it aboard through the hawse hole, and it was made fast on the windlass. Then the body lay along the ship's side, and the head projected ten feet astern. The officers agreed it was a large bull, and in prime condition. They predicted it would try out a hundred and fifteen barrels.

As we came over the side, a pretty tired lot, the Old Man sung out:

"Mr. Haveron, get to work!"

"Starboard boat's crew get breakfast!" ordered the mate. Then to the others: "Off with the main hatch! Get out those cutting tackles, and up aloft with them!"

While this was doing the cutting-in stage was rigged at the waist. This is a very simple affair, and consists of two twelve-foot planks

thrust outboard from amidships. Another plank of the same length is bolted to them at the outer ends, and the whole steadied and guyed by whips from aloft. A waist-high life line is added for the safety of the officers, who stand on it with their long-handled whaling spades. We had hurried down our meal by this time, and Mr. Stoddard and the fourth mate rolled up their sleeves, took a spade apiece, and went out on the stage. It was their especial work because the starboard boat had made the capture.

The whale was hauled forward until his neck came under the staging, and Stoddard started in to cut its head off. This was not an easy job, for it must have been eleven or twelve feet through. The spade has a handle twelve feet long, with six-inch blade. He worked away industriously until he was tired out, and then Morrison took a hand at it. The carcase was rolled or turned as they chopped to give them better opportunity, and finally by muscle and deftness combined they found the joint and got the head free from the body. A line had previously been attached, and it was allowed to float astern for the nonce.

Next a transverse line was marked out in

the blubber, and they got their spades underneath a ten-foot strip, and loosened it up. The huge cutting tackle was overhauled, and Fayal Joe—for he struck the bull—put a life line around his waist, and climbed down on the slippery back of Leviathan. It took an active and sure-footed man to stand on that greasy black skin, and more than one shark was already nosing around, but the nimble Portuguese scrambled along to the strip and cut a round hole in it with his keen boarding knife. Then he reached out for the tackle block, and hooked it in. This concluded his part of the performance, and he got back on deck with great celerity. The tackle fall had been carried forward to the old-fashioned windlass, and the whole crew of foremast hands now manned the brakes.

"Make a noise there! Let's hear you!" the Old Man called from the quarter, where he was watching every step of the proceedings with animated eyes.

Then Jonas, who it appeared, was the only chantey man in the bunch, piped up:

"Oh, Shenandoah, I love thy waters!"

And the crew chimed in, led by Fletcher in a

second bass, smooth as velvet, and deep as an organ note:

"Oh, ho, my rolling river!"

The Yankee took up the strain again:

"I love the place where dwell thy daughters."

The thundering chorus came:

"Oh, ho, I'm bound away
On the broad Missouri!"

The swing and rhythm of this was irresistible, and the brakes worked like mad. Up came the great blanket strip from the rolling body of the whale, the mates spading like demons to free the blubber from the red flesh. Haveron called:

"Two blocks!"

This meant the blocks of the tackle had come together, so the second one was overhauled, and Joe with his boarding knife made another hole in the blanket the level of the rail, and hooked the second tackle on. Then he cut the strip across it so it freed the upper one, and—

"Heave and surge!" was the order.

The fall tender let the first strip surge to the deck as the second one mounted to the mast-

head, while we continued our chantey. Three men were taken from the windlass, and two of them, armed with six-foot spades, started to cut the blanket strip into horse pieces for the mincing machine. The third used his sheath knife to clear the red meat from the inside of the blubber so it would not injure the quality of the oil.

Working with vim and good will, as we all did under the Old Man's eye, we soon skinned that whale's carcase down to the small, which, with the flukes, we heaved bodily in on deck. Those formidable flukes reached from rail to rail, and that was twenty-two feet, for I afterward measured it myself. After this the head was hauled up to the waist again and split lengthwise into case and junk, the latter being the upper part. A line was passed around it, the cutting tackle hooked on, and it was bowsed on deck, although it made the bark heel to the wave before it reached there.

"Now," said Jonas, who was next me on the brake beam, "look at this careful, Ned, and you'll see something that land lubbers would not believe."

This is what happened; the gang in the waist secured that "case," or lower jaw, on

end, and so the point was in the water and the butt on a level with the rail. Fayal Joe mounted it, dug in a bit with his knife, and then took a narrow pail like a small well-bucket from Stoddard, and began dipping oil out of the hole he had made.

"That's pure spermaceti," said Jonas, "and worth about three dollars a gallon."

I counted the bucketsful after this, and Joe filled it one hundred and fifty-seven times; four gallons to the bucket was six hundred and twenty-eight gallons of spermaceti out of the case. There is less than this in the junk, but it is so full of oil you can squeeze it out like water from a full sponge.

While I was digesting these facts Morrison came forward and beckoned to me. When I joined him he said:

"Stand by to help me get the fires started in the try works."

These are a large brick furnace, containing two iron kettles, built on the deck abaft the foremast, leaving a four-foot gangway to port and starboard to get by it. It is usually covered with a tarpaulin, which we removed. A large copper tank stood on the starboard side into which the cooked oil was ladled to cool,

and on the port was what he called a "scrap cooler." While he was starting a blaze in the firepits he told me to bring him some scraps, pointing to this cooler. I lifted the cover and found it filled with what looked like a lot of mouldy, greasy dough nuts. They turned out to be the crusts of the horse pieces after the oil had been boiled out, and made a fuel of wonderful quality, possessing almost complete combustion, and giving intense heat. Thus the unfortunate whale provides the fuel to boil the oil out of his blubber, and the whaleman is saved a serious item of expense.

The fires beginning to roar, we got out the mincing machine, and lashed it handy to the port pot. This is like an old-fashioned hay cutter and has a powerful knife, operated by a heavy balance wheel, and man power, which slices the horse pieces—two feet long by one high—as evenly as a carver cuts ham, only leaving the lower edge of piece untouched, so it all hangs together, yet can be boiled completely out. The men at work on the blankets in the waist began to have a store of horse pieces by this time, and they were being hauled and shoved over to us with gaffs and pikes. A man was called by Morrison to turn the

wheel of the machine. As the minced horse pieces came out of the mouth they dropped into a tub from whence Morrison caught them on a sort of a pitch fork, and flung them into the pots; and then the fires were roaring, the oil sizzling and the machine whirring at the same time.

It is difficult to conceive the degree of slipperiness and greasiness that marked our decks. I think sperm oil must be the best lubricant known to man, if the state of the Avola was anything to go by. I am sure-footed as a cat, but the way I slipped on that unaccustomed surface made it dangerous—to myself and others—for me to cross the deck. I was relieved to find that all were as bad as myself, and the number of bruises we got from our falls was astonishing. What was worse, we cut ourselves frequently on the spades and knives that seemed to be everywhere, and the raw oil made nasty, running sores that were difficult to get rid of.

It had been all hands on deck so far, but now that the whale was cut in and his blubber worked into horse pieces ready for the mincer, the press of work was over, and the starboard watch was sent below after dinner. When we

turned to again at the first dog watch at four o'clock, I found the cooper, "Bungs," he was nicknamed, hard at work setting up casks. We had a lot of shooks and hoop iron between decks, and whenever there was "an affair of oil" it was Bungs to the front.

As both watches were now on duty again, the decks were lippered up; the oil and grease, and small bits of red meat that had been cut from the blubber were gathered as thoroughly as possible, and the decks given a hearty sluicing down. When we were through, it looked less, and smelt less, like a dirty slaughter house than it had done previously. We did not shift our oil clothes—meaning the soaked ones we wore—until the remainder of the blubber was tried out. The casks containing the oil were not stowed away for several days, for it was necessary to watch and test them until danger of leakage was past.

I had now seen an affair of oil from the start to the finish, and began to feel, rather to the derisive amusement of Jonas, like an old blubber hunter. I must confess it was tough work while it lasted, and that I felt a sense of blessed relief when it was over and we had returned to our regular routine.

We were running down our southing now parallel to the west coast of Africa, and had a good deal of heavy weather, but the old Avola turned out to be a mighty comfortable sea boat, and I did not mind, except that I found standing mast head in a gale of wind, or a storm of sleet was no joke. However, I had discovered by this time that unpleasant things have to be endured, and that if you can summon the resolution to grin at them you are doing no more than most of your mess mates. When I come to think of it, I realise I learned a good many lessons on that cruise. One was to keep your temper under difficulties, and to never stop trying.

As we were doubling the Cape of Good Hope we ran into the heaviest storm we had encountered. We buffeted it, most of the time only under a rag of try sail. For forty-eight hours the old bark weltered along well-nigh under water. In fact, the decks were awash and lifelines were rigged to prevent us being swept over the rail. During this period the cook was unable to keep a fire in his galley stove, and our main food was hard tack. It was at this time I learned a hearty man can relish, and even digest, raw, fat salt pork on a pinch. I don't

suppose I'd care much for it to-day, but I recall very clearly that it tasted good then, and so far as I could see, it did not disagree with me. I certainly was pretty well occupied those three days, and did not give my digestive apparatus much thought.

By the time we ran through that gale into fair weather in the Indian ocean, our ship's company was pretty shook down. We had not had any more trouble in our watch in the forecastle, anyhow, since that first scrap over the division of the grub. There had been some slight unpleasantness at first, but it wore off, and the dagoes found that we "white men," as we called ourselves in contradistinction to them, were not bad fellows after all, if they did not impose on us. For my part I discovered qualities in the Portuguese make-up that I had never dreamed of. Of course, they were clannish, and ignorant, and superstitious, and bigoted. But when you had gained their confidence it was yours forever, and they were ordinarily good natured. I did some disgraceful lobbying and managed to elect Jonas captain of the forecastle. He made an ideal one, being full of tact united to sound judgment, and pos-

sessed ability to enforce his authority when questioned.

The Old Man could not of course descend very far from his quarter deck dignity, but he made it evident to me that my conduct had his approval. Tom Morrison and I had almost become chums. Whenever he had an opportunity to include me in his task he did so. He was a zealous teacher, and I an ardent pupil, and it came about that by the time we were four months out I had become so proficient in seamanship that I had little to learn from the oldest sailor forward, and could readily have rated as able seaman. Besides all this I was healthy as a wild duck, and had not a single regret for the easier life I had left behind in New York.

CHAPTER SIX

OUR passage across the Indian ocean was uneventful. Being near the equator the weather was warm, and we abandoned the forecastle as a place of residence, using it only to store our belongings. I took my mattress every night to the top of the forward house, the little uninclosed shed that covered the try works. Up there under the stars, tasting the fresh, briny breeze, I thought of how I used to sleep in the confinement of a stuffy room, and wondered at the restraints of a higher civilization.

In all this time we did not sight whales but once, and they were far away and "shoved junk" out of sight before we closed in on them. The Old Man said they were wild and timid, and acted as though they had been recently hunted. There was really no work to do except sail the vessel, but it is healthy shipboard rule to keep the foremast hands busy, and the officers displayed a surprising ingenuity in devising tasks to "work up our old iron." A

quantity of ancient tarred hempen cable was disinterred from the hold, and cut into five or six-foot lengths. We separated these into strands, and unlaid the rope-yarns. Then Spinning Jenny was set up, and we spun innumerable balls of marline, which were carefully stowed away in the sail room for future emergencies. Others of us manufactured the raw material into sinnate, three-ply and five-ply. When a sufficient store was accumulated, other tasks, even less essential, were sought out for us. I remember spending the better part of a week scrubbing and polishing that copper oil cooler with canvas and sand until I finally brought it to a state of dazzling and entirely unnecessary radiance. At the last we actually got up the chain cables from the lockers, during a tedious calm, ranged them neatly on deck in the waist, and pounded the rust off with club hammers. When we were through, it took us half a day to scrub the deck clean again.

During that same calm I had an adventure with sharks that made me careful ever after about bathing from a ship at sea. The word had been passed forward that during the second dog watch the men could go in bathing. It was a dead calm, and a man was kept at the

wheel merely for form. As we were preparing for the plunge Captain Bourne said to us:

"There may be sharks around, and I won't insure your legs."

Then he called to Mr. Fletcher, who was standing lookout at the main masthead:

"Keep a lookout for fins close in, Mr. Fletcher. I can't afford to lose any of the men."

I have always been a good swimmer, and found the rest were tyros alongside of me, so I had to show off. It was nothing for me, with my gymnasium experience, to run up the rigging, out on the top gallant yard arm, poise a moment in mid air and then spring far out, coming down and cleaving the water head first. It took them all aback, and I had the after gang at the rail watching and clapping their hands, even to the Old Man.

The others soon had enough, and came out. I took one last dive from the forward rail, and made a reach out from the ship's side of ten or twelve rods. As I turned to come back to the Avola, Fletcher suddenly sung out from aloft:

"Swim hard, Ned, if you ever did! There's a big blue shark out there, and I think he's onto you."

I heard Fletcher's warning cry plainly, and it sent a chill to my heart. As I involuntarily raised my body in the water to see where the shark was, I heard the Captain roar:

"Starboard boat away!"

I could not see the shark, but lost no time digging out at a racing pace toward the ship. I could see the starboard boat in the water, with the Old Man in the stern handling the steering oar. The crew was made up of naked men, and Tom Morrison himself had the after oar. It did not seem a jiffy, though it was a pretty anxious one, before the boat and I were close together, and then the Captain threw his hand up and yelled to me from forty feet away:

"Close behind you, Ned! Can you dodge him?"

I turned in the water and saw the back fin of the shark cutting the wave twenty feet away. I was scared half out of my senses, of course, but I did not seem to act more slowly on account of the fact. I remembered, even at that paralysing moment, that a shark has to turn on his back to seize his prey. It seemed to me he was on the point of doing this, but I summoned the nerve to wait the hundredth part of a second to make sure, for I felt that was

my only chance. That interval could only have been an eye-wink, but it seemed an eternity of time, and the upright fin moved nearer. Then, hurrah! his body gave a twist—and I dived out of sight, heading to the boat, actively as a porpoise.

The next instant I rose on the other side, and Morrison had my arm in his strong grasp and was hauling me bodily aboard. While I sat breathless on the thwart beside him, I saw the baffled shark come up in his old posture with a puzzled air, as if he wondered how in the deuce I had managed to get away.

Sandalwood Island was the first land we sighted since leaving New Bedford, except the peak of Teneriffe. It was most refreshing to my eyes to see the waves dashing on the white beach, and the cocoanut groves, the trees looking like gigantic feather dusters wrong end up, in the background. We coasted along about three miles away, and had a fine view. Now I felt that we were really in the South Seas of Oceanica, that fabled region of romance that had always excited my imagination.

A few days after losing sight of Sandalwood Island we came into that maze called the Zooloo seas. It is an archipelago, and we seemed

hardly ever to get out of sight of land. If one islet went hull down, another reared its head, looking much like the last, in front of us. It was evident we were not cruising, for we steered a regular course, and the Old Man kept a sharp eye on the after cabin telltale to see that the helmsman held the Avola on it. If he got dreamy and let her fall off a few points, Uncle Zene was promptly on deck and interviewed him to his discomfiture. It was at this time Tom Morrison let out to me that we were bound for the Port of Kema, on the island of Celebes, to refill our water casks, as the supply of that important fluid was becoming in need of replenishment. He had been there before, and told me no white people lived there except a Dutch Resident and a few traders, it being under the rule of Holland. It was merely a native village on an open roadstead. The natives were a nice set of fellows, and we'd probably have a liberty day ashore. Shortly after this conversation, a plaintive, long-drawn howl came down from the man at the fore masthead:

"Land, ho!"

The Captain, who was pacing the weather quarter, looked up and observed to Mr. Have-

ron, who leaned against the taffrail, cutting a pipe-full of tobacco:

"That's the hill of Tchiboula, sir, to the left of our anchorage ground. Brace the main yard and give a pull on the halliards, and with this breeze we'll sight the town in two hours."

"Aye, aye, sir!" answered the mate. Then in a sharper tone: "Lay aft here, and brace the main yard!"

The willing men sprang to the braces, and to the cheerful "Make a noise there!" of the Old Man, started a lively chantey and braced the yards sharp to the wind.

"Main tops'l halliards!" was the next order, and soon we had every sail flat as a board and had shaken a knot or two out of the old Avola.

Before the two hours were up we were close enough to see the houses of the beautiful little village. It lay nestled among the trees at the base of the hill, and looked as peaceful a sanctuary as ever mortal gazed upon. We had no time to grow sentimental over it for the mate's voice growled:

"Off with the main hatch here! Jump down in the hold one of you and pass up the end of the cable. Look alive, lads!"

Shortly the cable was ranged, the anchor

gotten off the bow, and the mate reported respectfully to that mighty potentate, the Old Man:

"All ready to let go, sir!"

"Very well, sir," returned he with quarter-deck politeness, taking command himself: "Stand by the foresail, the larboard watch! Mainsail here the rest of you. Let go the to'gallant sheets! Clewlines and buntlines haul! Let go to'gallant halliards! Clew 'em up, my lads! Now your foretops'l sheets! Main tops'l sheets! Hard down your wheel! Let go the anchor!"

Plunge! went the starboard bower, rattling twenty fathom of chain cable along with it. The Avola swung sluggishly around head to the wind, and we lay at anchor in Kema road-stead. A fleet of canoes had put off from the shore and swarmed around the ship. Each tiny craft held one or more bright-eyed, dusky-hued, gesticulating, grinning natives, and by the time we had the sails stowed they were all on board. Each was bent on—according to a tradition I had read of in Captain Cook's Voyages, but had never hoped to see realised—selecting a congenial spirit among the crew, to whom the guileless savage devoted himself, de-

claring the chosen one to be the friend of his heart, and soul-brother to all eternity. Thenceforth until the ship should leave, this gentle, brown-skinned brother attached himself to the service of his newly-made friend. He lets no day pass without coming off at least once to feast his eyes upon him, and fares out each time full-handed with all the delicious tropical fruits of the country, and even cooked delicacies if these pall.

A young Apollo with eager, merry smile made overtures to me with a bunch of fruit, and I closed an immediate compact of fraternity with him. He was so winning in speech and mien that I was almost as fervent as he in protestations of devotion. His costume was airy though picturesque, and admirably adapted to the climate. It consisted of a single piece of figured cotton print, about two yards long by one wide, wrapped about his loins. The rest of his handsome, bronze body was bare. When we had concluded our mutual vows he leapt over the bulwark, going down the side of the ship like a cat to his canoe, and passed up a magnificent bunch of bananas. Not the clumsy, thick-skinned plantains we see in temperate climes, but the real Chinese

sugar *banana,* small, beautiful in form, with rounded curves, a thin skin, and a flavor! delicate, insinuating, luscious! melting on the tongue, enchanting the palate. And even this divine fruit was not half the sum of what my Nikolas—this was his name—laid at my feet. Oranges, cocoanuts, mummy apples, mangosteens, and even palm toddy had he brought off in such profusion that the quantity threatened to overflow my bunk.

Our newly found brothers remained aboard until nightfall. Before we turned in the word was passed forward the starboard watch were to prepare for liberty the following morning. There was a grand overhauling of donkeys, and the contents of mine were brought out, and viewed with a critical eye. When I got through inspection I decided the best suit I possessed was on my back. It consisted of an oil-stained shirt, and a pair of weather-beaten drawers very much the worse for wear, and so patched with canvas that only close observation enabled one to determine that flannel was the fundamental material. I bought a good-sized piece of white duck from Big Anton for a plug of tobacco, with which I was better supplied than apparel, and sitting under bare poles, ap-

plied a workmanlike patch across the seat of the dilapidated garment. Then I donned them in serene consciousness that I was fit to go ashore in any village in the archipelago.

The sun came sliding up from the edge of the sea the next morning bright and clear and looked down on the starboard watch—out since the first streak of dawn—prinking preparatory to the descent on the village. Water, fresh water, a luxury on a whale ship, was dealt out in unheard profusion, a pint to each member of the go-ashore gang! Jonas and I united our supply, and tossed up to see who should wash his face first. Not until this function was performed did we utilise the fluid for the other portions of our bodies. The ceremony was completed by sluicing ourselves down with buckets of salt water drawn from over the side. You see, salt water, however pleasant to bathe in, is useless to cleanse. As I was giving myself the last rub with the piece of old canvas that did duty as a towel Nikolas appeared, and learning to his delight that I was bound ashore, volunteered to convey me thither in his canoe, declaring I was his guest for the day.

The island of Celebes which I was going to visit is little known to the world at large. It lies between Borneo and New Guinea, but is smaller than either. Unlike them it abounds in grassy plains free from forests which furnish abundant pasture, and wild game is plentiful. The plains are the common property of the tribes that live on them, and intrusion from aliens is jealously guarded against. The tiger and leopard, though found in other parts of the archipelago, are curiously enough unknown in Celebes. Horses are numerous, and though small possess unusual strength, spirit, and endurance. Their spirited heads and clean limbs seem to denote their descent from some thoroughbred strain of blood.

Rice, maize, cotton, cassava, and tobacco are the chief products of the soil; the exports, which at that time were principally to China, included birds' nests—the edible kind—tripang, sharks' fins, and tortoise shell. Gold is not unusual in the beds of the streams, but has not been found in great abundance. The population of the island was estimated at two millions and consists of two principal races: the Haraforas, who inhabit the interior and the Bugis, who

live principally on the coast. These latter manufacture a cloth celebrated among the other islands for durability and fineness.

The form of government is in most cases a limited monarchy, in which the sovereign is controlled by the subordinate chiefs, and occasionally they again by the people. Women are eligible to the throne, and take an active part in political affairs. This fact is noteworthy for Mohammedanism is the prevailing religion.

CHAPTER SEVEN

NIKOLAS placed me in the bow of his cranky craft, and telling me—not exactly in those words—to try and preserve my center of gravity, he took his place in the stern and bent to his work. His dexterity was marvellous, and we fairly flew. A few minutes brought us to the shore. The starboard boat with the rest of the liberty men, left the ship's side at the same time we did, and as we were not a whale they did not exert themselves to keep up. I waited on the shore to find out the programme of the day. Of course, sailor-like, the first and main idea was to get drunk, that is with most of them. Two or three made an engagement to meet in the market place, and if their sheets weren't fluttering too much, take a ride on horseback. Nikolas said that there would be no difficulty getting steeds, and whispered to me privately in his broken English that I could ride his horse as much as I wished free of cost, because of his exceeding great love for me. Then he and I walked along the main

street of the village. It was a long esplanade lined on either side with magnificent trees. The houses were built well back from the roadside, and without exception had large flower gardens in front. The dwellings were spacious, and covered a large area but were only one story in height. To my eyes they were rather conspicuously painted. Orange seemed a favorite color though you could find every hue in the rainbow. Some of the larger residences were really attractive and kept with unexpected trimness. Ten minutes walk brought us to the market place. Long before we arrived we could hear the hum and buzz of the crowd of natives. There was a clamor which rivalled the stock and cotton exchanges rolled into one. It was unlawful to buy and sell anywhere except in this place, Nikolas said, and the traders had to pay a high price for the privilege of putting up and operating a stand in it—sometimes the enormous sum of two dollars a year!

I had found out by this time that my brother Nikolas was a man of consequence in his community. In point of fact he was the local native school teacher, and drew an absurd salary of something like forty dollars per annum

from the Dutch government for his professional services. He now proposed to exhibit his school to me, and told me on the way, he had procured a substitute to attend to his duties during my stay in port. The school edifice turned out to be the only two-storied building in Kema. The classes were reciting as we entered. The pupils were few of them more than seven or eight years of age, and of extraordinary precocity in body and mind. A brighter, prettier set of children are seldom seen than they were, though I must confess they smelt rather strongly of the cocoanut oil with which their bodies and hair appeared to be freely smeared. Otherwise each one was clean as a new button. As nearly as I could make out, for the language was literally Dutch to me, they were reciting a spelling lesson, or one in arithmetic. It called up memories of the time when I was a country school boy, and drawled in sing-song nasal tone, with the rest of the class:

"Two times one are two; two times two are four; two times three are six;" or "G-e, ge, o, geo; g-r-a-, geogra; p-h-y, fy, geography!"

At the conclusion of this lesson Nikolas had them sing, and they all arose and warbled sev-

eral of the old, familiar Methodist hymn tunes of my childhood, set to Malay words. It made me choke a little to hear these unforgotten strains rising up in this out of the way, and almost barbarous place. It brought back the old meetin' house on the brow of the hill, school house during the week days. Then the voice of Nikolas was again in my ear. He said:

"Now, s'pose you want, Ned, me take you along to home belong to me. S'pose there, you want drink, me give drink. S'pose you want smoke, me give. My sister make dinner in two hour."

I went with him. He lived in a neat house on the main street. It was thirty feet back from the road and the front part of the yard was a flower bed of indescribable gorgeousness. As we entered the house my nostrils were greeted by the most delicious scent they had ever known. I asked my brown brother what it was, and he pointed out several bushes to me. They were from eight to ten feet high, with green foliage interspersed with bunches of beautiful white flowers, and dark purple berries. This, he explained, was the coffee bush, and he would directly give me some coffee made from its beans.

At this moment two charming brown-skinned maidens, one about fifteen and the other perhaps a year older, appeared from the interior, and I was introduced to Nikolas' sisters. Unfortunately they had not a word of English, but I made them comprehend I loved their brother, and desired to be on friendly terms with them. They were delightful creatures, although only half-civilized Malay girls. The eldest was a large, well developed, blooming Hebe, while the younger was an arch, slender sprite who turned everything into fun. But I must not linger over them. Enough to say they gave me a mighty good dinner of which I would be puzzled to name the ingredients, and at the close of the meal a cup of coffee whose equal I never drank.

While I was lighting the cigar one of the girls rolled me I heard a clatter of hoofs, and there was my brother in front of the gate mounted on as pretty a pony-built horse as I ever laid eyes on. I was out in a moment examining every point of the little beauty. He was caparisoned with an English saddle and bridle, and his hide and hair were soft and silky as if he had come from under the hands of an accomplished groom. He did not seem

to mind my two hundred pounds in the least—he even pranced under the weight. Nikolas ran alongside, and I set off down the street to the market place. The animal had a long, even pace that rolled as easily and gradually from one side to the other as a rocking chair. We soon came to where Tom Morrison, Bungs the cooper, and Big Anton were gathered to meet me.

All three were considerably over the bay, having wit enough left to be full of Old Nick, and stick like grim death to their mounts. None of them knew how to ride, and I saw a catastrophe was imminent, but the ponies were so small, a poor rider had not far to go, and sailors are proverbially tough, so I gave no warnings, and we started in a mad gallop up the street.

Big Anton was the first to come to grief. After growing somewhat used to the motion of his craft his confidence begot carelessness, and he allowed for a weather instead of a lee roll, which brought his line of preponderance outside his center of gravity. When he found his seat precarious he dropped his bridle, and clasped his saddle more closely than ever with legs and hands. This hastened his discom-

fiture as his girths were loose. The saddle turned and Anton stood on his head. The horse stopped when it realised something was amiss, and the victim picked himself up amid our roars in no wise the worse for his mishap, save that the crown of his hat was crushed out of shape.

"Jesu Maria!" he exclaimed, and lapsed into a state of solemn wonder.

This was only the beginning. I noticed Bungs had his enormous feet shoved through his stirrups, which in the way he utilised them resembled a pair of barbaric anklets. I was on the point of warning him he had better take his feet out when up came Tom Morrison in a mad dash. Bungs' pony gave a sidelong jump, and the cooper, who had succeeded in getting his foot out of the starboard stirrup, described a sudden parabolic curve in the air, the length of which would have been greater had it not been circumscribed by the hold the other stirrup had.

I got the steed by the head and stopped him as he was bolting, while Tom extricated the spluttering cooper from his predicament. By the time we returned from our ride each, with me as the honorable exception,

had several falls, and my shipmates decided that riding was not half so much of an amusement as it looked to those who had not tried it.

Our liberty did not expire until daybreak the next morning, at which time we were expected to be on board. The sailors had found a sort of boozing ken on the outskirts of the village, where I was informed with much exultation they could purchase square-faced Hollands gin in unlimited quantities for the equivalent of forty cents a bottle. This was a fortuitous opportunity not to be neglected by sea-faring men, and they embraced it with ardor. My brother Nikolas who had come by this time to regard me as one apart from the average foremast hand, told me frankly I had better remain with him instead of joining the revellers. I confirmed his confidence by pledging myself to return to his house to spend the evening, and he agreed to ferry me to the Avola in his canoe before midnight. He invited me to call with him on the Dutch Resident, but I decided my costume left something in the way of adequacy to be desired when it came to making ceremonious calls, and declined.

My decision to spend a quiet evening with Nikolas and his sisters—and a very pleasant

one it proved—was more than justified the next morning when the liberty gang returned to the ship. They had a lively time which wound up in a row with the natives. A Portuguese called Madeira had been struck between the shoulders by a green cocoanut hurled at him by an indignant Bugis. I was unacquainted with the cocoanut in the character of a missle up to this time, but it certainly was a thing to fight shy of judging by its effects in this case. It had nearly broken his spine, and thrown both his shoulders out of commission. The others said but for the gallantry of Tom Morrison and Jonas, who had charged the mob of warlike natives and by desperate fighting succeeded in routing them, Madeira never would have been able to leave the field of battle.

Nikolas made his appearance soon after the watch came aboard, and told me Madeira had made overtures to the villager's womenfolk and the natives were considerably exercised over the occurrence. In consequence of this happening the Old Man decided not to give the port watch liberty as he had intended, for fear of further complications. When the consequences of his indiscretion were found to be

so far-reaching, it made Madeira unpopular with the disappointed men, and one of them gave him a sound thrashing as soon as he had sufficiently recovered from the effects of the cocoanut to stand it. That, as they say in diplomatic circles, closed the incident.

It did not take long to get our water casks filled. We towed them to the mouth of a stream a mile above the village. It was downright hard work, but it was all day on deck for both watches, and sleep all night. Before we pulled up the mud hook the captain purchased five hundred green cocoanuts, and fifty bunches of bananas for general use at sea as long as they lasted. He told me the whole quantity cost about five dollars American money, and it was desirable for sanitary reasons to give all hands a good scouring out after their long regimen of salt diet. And, by the way, did you ever eat one of these green nuts? You split it open with a hatchet after drinking the juice. The white meat is half-formed, and the consistency of custard. You eat it with a spoon, and it's good.

Of course my brother Nikolas, who had stuck to me closer than wax during our whole stay, was with me when we got our anchor

apeak. By shrewd dickering and the sacrifice of a large share of my store of tobacco, I had managed to get in the way of barter from some of the opulent Portuguese a Havre red flannel shirt of good quality, and a gorgeous Roman silk tie. To these I added a much bullioned yachting cap I had in my donkey—I was ashamed to wear it—and laid them in my brother's lap the last sad morning when we bade each other farewell. The tears were in his eyes at the munificence of the offering, and in mine at its inadequacy. Then we embraced in haste, but fervently, and parted. I never think of him to this day without my heart growing warm.

Our course lay to the northward towards the Philippines after leaving Kema, and I heard from aft that we were now on what was considered good sperm whaling grounds. Indeed, the fact was plainly evident in the changed demeanor of the Old Man and the officers. Captain Bourne spent most of his time on deck, and he paced the quarter like a lonely wildcat in a cage. Every now and then he would pause in his swift walk, go to the rail and sniff the wind. Morrison said as we watched him do this:

"The Old Man thinks he can smell 'em, and I believe he can!"

One day a sail was reported from the masthead, and in a couple of hours we drew close to it and saw it was a British whaler, from Sydney probably, the captain affirmed, under easy canvas and cruising like ourselves. Later on the Lime-juicer cleared away his boat and came to pay the Avola a visit, "gam" they call it in whaling parlance. When they arrived Mr. Haveron took his boat's crew and departed to the Martha, that turning out to be her name. This is whaling etiquette.

The new-comer was Captain Tugwell, English to the back-bone, and in the whaling service all his life out of Scotland first, and later Sydney, New South Wales. It had struck four bells in the morning watch—ten o'clock, shore time—and the wind had fallen away till there was scarcely steerage way. Stoddard the second mate, and Fayal Joe stood at the main masthead sweeping the surrounding waters with their binoculars. The fierce tropical sun melted the pitch between the deck planks, and made the tar on the shrouds and swifters blister.

The two captains paced the quarter deck.

The Briton was tall, bearded and muscular; old uncle Zene, under-sized, sinewy, and clean-shaven. He made two steps to Captain Tugwell's one. They resembled a bull and a panther caged together. The restless manner in which they prowled back and forth suggested confined wild animals. Now and then the American master went to the side, and sniffed the air with a curiously alert expression on his face. He seemed to scent prey. The stalwart Englishman watched him with intelligent eyes, and a certain air of expectancy.

After one of these trips to the rail our Old Man called out in his curt, decisive voice:

"Pass the word to Mr. Morrison to come aft."

The fourth mate popped up like a jack-in-the-box.

"Tom," said Captain Bourne, meeting him at the fife rail, and speaking so Tugwell did not hear: "Get the starboard boat in the water and stand by with the crew. I *smell whales,* and this Lime-juicer shall not get away first if they're raised, for I'm going to lower myself."

Tom, who was of course the Old Man's boatsteerer in this case, met his eye with per-

fect understanding and his soul was full of joy, but he only answered quietly:

"Aye, aye, sir."

Uncle Zene returned to his guest while Tom swung himself by the swifter to the starboard roof of the after house.

"Lay aft here, Long Island Ned!" he called.

I dropped my scrub rag, and got there quick. Morrison wasted no time in words. Together we lifted the two tubs containing the coiled whale line into the boat, which swung outward from the davits. His few hasty sentences had put me on, and I seized the water keg and dropped to deck; I now kept my bread sack filled in case of sudden emergency. By the time he had got his harpoons and lances stowed in their cleats in the boat I was back.

"Stand by the starboard falls!" sung out Tom.

The three other men of our crew—Jonas, and two Portuguese—were old whalemen, sturdy fellows, and especially good oarsmen. They had been watching Morrison and me with lively interest. As they got the word, they bounded aft, and in a twinkle were at the falls.

"Lower away!" said the fourth mate. He and I stepped in the boat as it fell toward the

water. When it met the wave Tom deftly unhooked the bow tackle, and I did the same by the one at the after thwart.

"Stand by to take the short warp!" called the officer.

It shot from his hand and was caught by Joe Wing, who pulled the midship oar. He had been rechristened after an outfitter in New Bedford by Morrison because his Portuguese name was cumbrous to the tongue. The boat ranged alongside, and the fourth mate leaped into the chains. As he scrambled up, he said:

"Stay with her, Ned."

Morrison walked quietly forward again. He spoke briefly to Jonas, who passed the word to Joe Wing and Manuel, the midship and bow oars, and all three lounged around the break of the try works, alert as ferrets. Morrison himself pulled the harpooner oar when the Captain lowered, and I was at the after oar, and a good one, if I say it myself; and there you have our crew.

Captain Tugwell had an eye like a hawk, and he observed these significant preparations with a complacent grin. He rested easy in the knowledge—as I heard after—of the possession of the strongest boat crew out of Sydney, and

although he was perfectly aware of the purpose of the master of the Avola he did not doubt that if the two boats started anywhere near on even terms, his would reach the whales first. The next moment his eye caught sight of a sudden commotion on the Martha, half a mile to leeward.

Then both skippers straightened and grew rigid, while a sonorous voice came down from the main royal slings:

"Thar she blows! thar she blows! thar she blows! thar she white waters!"

Captain Bourne's voice cut the air like a fife, as he threw back his head to gaze aloft, but though it made the blood tingle in the veins of every man in hearing, it was steady and controlled:

"What do you make of them spouts, Mr. Stoddard? And how do they bear?"

"Sperm whale, sir! Three points off the lee bow. About two miles off! It's another big, lone bull breaching, sir!"

"Aye, aye. Lay down from aloft, sir! Shipkeepers stand by! Lower away!"

At the first hail Captain Tugwell's crew of brawny beef eaters, all old whalemen, had streamed aft and entered their craft, which lay

ahead of our starboard boat, which I held close under the chains. Tugwell, like a gallant fellow, hesitated between his sense of fairness and his keenness to get away, and he and Uncle Zene leaped over the side at the same instant. Our boat crew seemed to occupy their places by magic, and as each skipper grasped the handle of his steering oar, Tugwell called to Bourne:

"It's a fair start, sir! I'll give you a dinner if I don't make fast first!"

"Same here!" returned the undaunted Old Man.

The oar blades dipped, and it seemed as if the ship suddenly shot away from us. The whale lay ahead at the apex of a triangle of which the other two points were the Avola and the Martha.

So the struggle — an international whale-chase—had begun.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FOR a hundred and twenty-five years or so the Americans and Britons have been trying each other's mettle in various ways, and here was as pretty a contest of nerve and muscle as ever occurred between them. Both of us were crack crews. The boats were the same model, and within five pounds of equal weight. The English sailors, man by man, appeared bigger and stronger. The Americans had pulled together six months, the others ten. Both captains were seamen, and true men from the soles of their feet to the arch of their skulls.

Side by side, and not ten feet apart, we pulled, and neither forged a foot ahead of the other. The water was smooth as a mill pond, and if there was a difference, Tugwell's men made a hair the most splutter. I held myself down—looking at the captain somehow helped me—and pulled as I never pulled before. I gripped the water firmly, barely covering my blade, put my whole weight in the stroke, and got in a vicious ting at the end that made the

boat jump. The captain nodded with a stern smile on his gaunt features, and I knew I was right. Morrison, Manuel, Joe Wing and Jonas knew how to pull, too. The oars, three to starboard, two on the port, rose and fell as truly with my stroke, and feathered as rhythmically as if the same powerful hand controlled all. There was no hurry, no excitement; we all smiled, and save for the rush of the boat, and the foamy curl on each side the bow, our power would have gone unsuspected.

Before half a mile had passed the complacent smirk disappeared from the English skipper's face. No one was a better judge of men and boats, and what he saw made him anxious. His broad face became grim, and he turned again to his own crew:

"A little quicker! And steady, my men. Steady!"

Then I saw the form of the after oarsman of the Martha's boat draw ahead, bit by bit. I turned my head, and met the gray eye of Uncle Zene. Persistent use of the telescope had set it deep in his head, and although it was glowing like a live coal, somehow I gathered coolness and comfort from it.

"They've got more beef, Ned," he murmured,

softly, "and maybe they'll be sorry for it after they keep this lick up another mile. Steady, boy. We're doing well."

Captain Tugwell drew a length ahead, and stayed there. We pulled like a well-oiled machine, and wore our old, happy expression. We looked at the Old Man in the stern sheets. We knew him, and were easy, although each of us, despite seeming carelessness, had sporting blood enough to have given our lay sooner than be beaten. The whale was in full sight from the boats, although only the masters, who faced the chase, could see him. He had ceased breaching and lay at ease, a patch of his broad back as big as a barn showing above the blue water.

The boats from the Martha had got away before those from the Avola, and were coming down the further side of the triangle, but our captain saw that Mr. Haveron headed them. These boats would have been nearer the whale than we but for the duel between the skippers. As it was the superior crews of the latter had wiped out the advantage in the start. It was only a question whether Tom Morrison or Captain Tugwell's boatsteerer would "break blackskin" first. But wait a bit!

The whale was only half a mile away, and the two boats were coming up abaft his fin. It would not do to cross his line of sight, which—fortunately for whalemen—is restricted.

"A leetle more ginger, Ned!" breathed Uncle Zene.

It seemed to me I had been waiting half my life for this permission. I gathered myself and lay back on my oar with a smooth, fluent heave, that, as the rest of the crew took the new motion, seemed to lift the boat over the water instead of forcing her through it. But Captain Tugwell was not the man to be caught napping. He heard the bitter grind of the oar looms on the rowlocks, and with a quick glance backward he leaned to his sturdy fellows, and cried:

"*Now* PULL!"

Hurrah! Here was the tug of war! Those brawny British giants straightened themselves in a simultaneous flash, and in a twinkle both crews were in a contest that would have disabled ordinary or untrained men by the violence of their exertions. The pretense of indifference was thrown off the faces like a discarded mask, and now these Anglo-Saxons, American and British, locked their jaws like sprung steel traps. Tugwell's black beard bristled with

eagerness, and as much of his countenance as could be seen was crimson. He had abandoned all affectation of unconcern, and his gaze at Captain Bourne was a defiant glare.

Uncle Zene's attitude would have made a superb marble of Action. His poise suggested a leap forward, and he seemed only to hold himself back by the grasp of the corded left hand on the steering oar. His face was livid, and his eyes no longer burning coals, but intense lightning, as they flashed over his own crew to the British boat, and beyond to the whale.

The second of time I had captured sent our boat ahead with a leap that nearly closed the gap. Clink! Clank! went the leathered looms in the iron row locks. The wave turned white and hissed as the bows cut it, and, inch by inch, we gained! Tugwell shifted the grip of his steering oar from his right to his left hand, but before he completed the motion our skipper reached forward, and falling into my heave, pushed on the after oar as I pulled. The Briton executed the same manœuvre two heartbeats later, but he had been forestalled. Now, Joe Wing, tugging at the midship oar, caught a glimpse of the Sydney boat, and his staunch

ashen blade tore through the water with a force that tried its virtue. Then Jonas saw the British bow, and at last it came in my line of vision. The Lime-juicers were being fairly out-pulled!

Neither crew took a thought of the whale in this desperate work. Our backs being to it we could not see, and, anyway, it was the business of the captains to look after that part of the affair; ours to win the race. But Leviathan was close aboard now. Suddenly the Old Man stood erect:

"Avast pulling!"

The stroke was arrested in mid air, and with a common impulse we looked over our shoulders.

"There goes flukes!" added he.

What we saw was a huge, ebony column, ten yards high, a hundred feet in front. The bull had literally stood on his head preparatory to sounding, and as we gazed he passed out of sight, waving in farewell a pair of flukes twenty feet broad.

Captain Tugwell's boat shot ahead ten feet, and now its crew lay on its oars. Tugwell was delighted. This incident had altered the complexion of affairs, and given him another chance. Neither skipper could foretell with

any certainty when and where the bull would reappear. The oldest whaleman might be forgiven for making an error in this matter. Nothing but absolute divination could determine it, and it was mightily important. The nearest boat would probably be the first to get fast, and the first iron driven into the blubber decided not only the captains' dinner bet and the rivalry of the crews, but the ownership of the whale. For no matter who kills, the law of the whaling ground holds that "he who strikes first shall possess."

That black tower of flesh and fat represented a hundred barrels of oil, a matter of four or five thousand dollars, and one not to be underrated by a thrifty Yankee on the fifteenth lay. Uncle Zene had pitted his brains against the wits of sperm whales almost from his birth. Was he, who could follow a school across the trackless ocean as a hound trails the deer, to be beaten now by a Lime-juicer from Sydney! He tried, as it were, to fill his veins with oil and his brain with spermaceti in the effort to creep inside the skin of that hundred-barrel bull. Presently he said softly:

"Pull all!"

Captain Tugwell had taken position a quarter of a mile beyond where the whale had sounded. The other boats arrived on the scene, and stationed themselves behind him.

"Avast! Back water!" said our Old Man. "Look out, Mr. Morrison. Don't peak your oars, my men. Stand by, all!"

Uncle Zene had brought up half-way between the British captain's boat and the spot where we had last seen the whale. He reasoned that the bull was not alarmed, and had no motive for running away. His keen eye had noted the slight indication of the flukes, and this gave him the clue to direction. Our boat lay—recollect this—stern on to the Sydney captain's.

The vertical sun scorched and roasted. The oily blue water threw back the heat at the brassy heavens, and the atmosphere quivered as if on the point of ignition. Ten minutes, fifteen passed. Each sailor watched along the line of his oar. The eyes of Morrison and the Old Man devoured all space. Of a sudden a long, sobbing respiration quavered at Captain Bourne's back, and I, facing that way, saw the square, black mass of the bull's head emerge midway between the boats. Uncle Zene sprang

a foot in the air and half whirled, laying back on his steering oar to bring his boat around. Tugwell's crew had caught the water.

Joe Wing had an inspiration and surged on his oar to assist the captain overcome the inertia of the boat. She shot around, more swiftly than the Old Man had counted on. He overreached, failed to recover, and went overboard with a great splash!

I caught the flash of the Briton's oar blades as the captain's heels passed out of sight. Then I rose to the occasion and made myself famous. I sprang to my feet, tossing my oar to the skipper with the same motion. My hand gripped the handle of the steering oar, and I yelled:

"Give way!"

Jonas, Joe Wing, Manuel and Tom Morrison heard my command, which was half appeal, and answered. It was the last chance for the bull whale, and the bet! They strained on the ash blades until their former efforts were as nothing.

"Steady, steady there! Stand up, Tom!" I cried.

Morrison peaked his oar, and the next instant braced his knee in the clumsy cleat, his

harpoon above his head. The British boat-steerer, on the *other* side of the whale, was rising.

"Give it to him!" I yelled.

It was a long dart, but the fourth mate obeyed his after oarsman. The iron gleamed in the air and sank—chock to the hitches—in the blubber.

"Starn all! We're fast!" he shouted.

We picked up the Old Man as we backed out of the way of the whale's flukes.

"Blast you," he said to me, "you're all right!"

I will not deny I was inclined to rejoice over my exploit, but I did not have much leisure to receive congratulations or plume myself. That whale started to sound, and we had to attend to business. Besides it appeared this bull had his herd of cows in the immediate vicinity, and they ranged up when they found their leader was in trouble. The captain told me that ordinarily a bull is looked upon—by the cows—as able to take care of himself. At any rate, he is usually left to fight his battles alone. Our victim's harem must have been near by, although undiscovered by us until the starboard boat had got fast.

The result of the appearance of the balance of the school was that every boat except one, belonging to the Martha, killed a whale. This was seven in all, three to the Englishman and four to us. It was extraordinary good fortune, and put every one into the highest spirits. Of course, they were all cows except the one we had got, and much smaller, and of less value. But such as they were, they gave us plenty occupation. There being no wind, the Avola was unable to come to us, so we secured our whales together, and, stringing out the boats tandem-wise, one ahead of the other, we towed our carcases to the ship. That was hot work, if you please, with the thermometer at about 110, no sea on to help us, and those four whales dragging behind. Luckily the bark was only about two miles distant at the kill, and by supper time we had them all alongside.

This was one of the whaling exigencies where no time was to be lost, and every man was expected to do his duty, and as much more as he was able. In the prevailing hot weather that blubber was liable to "blast," that is become stringy and sticky so it could not be advantageously worked and tried out. If we did not get it into the try pots before these

conditions set in, we might lose hundreds or even thousands of dollars, besides having our work go for nothing.

Now Uncle Zene came to the front. He took personal charge of every detail himself, and was here, there, and everywhere; supervising, inspiriting, lending a sturdy fist where it was needed, until he fired every heart. I recollect there was a glorious moon that night; the serene skies were filled with golden, softly glowing stars, like jewels lying on a velvet mantle. The white canvas hung above us without a breath of air stirring its folds, and the fires under the pots roared and cast their ruddy gleams through the shadows.

All through the night we labored without cessation, and when the early dawn appeared, all but one of the whales was cut in. All hands were kept on deck throughout the day. Even the Old Man did not take advantage of his privilege, as supreme in authority, to get some rest. He even had the steward serve his meals on deck, and at the fag end of our weary task he looked as fresh and vigorous as if he had just turned out. There were no flies on Uncle Zenas, and his whole ship's company were willing to acknowledge it.

CHAPTER NINE

THEY were as busy on board the Martha as we were, and the weather remaining calm, the vessels drifted about, within a mile of each other the whole period of the cutting in and trying out. At last, when Mr. Morrison had ladled the last skimmerful of oil into the cooler, and the fierce stress of the occasion was over, one of the mastheads hailed the deck and reported the Martha was signalling. Captain Bourne had the signal halliards rove and got his code up in a jiffy. A conversation by means of flags ensued, and at the end the Old Man summoned Morrison and announced that Tugwell wanted to pay that dinner bet the next day, and he desired the Master of the Avola to bring his own boat crew, for the men of his boat who had been beaten in rowing wanted to make the acquaintance of the fellows who were able to do it.

We thought the Lime-juicers pretty decent chaps, and the balance of our shipmates were

inclined to be envious of our good fortune, for it was assumed a feast would be tendered us as well as our captain. Anything pertaining to grub is of paramount importance in the forecastle six months out, and it was expected all the delicacies in the Martha's run would be handed out. Speculation was rife as to the nature of the particular dainties, and the wildest prophecies were made by Jonas, who pretended to be informed on the bill of fare of ships hailing from Australia.

According to whaling etiquette the first mate of the Martha came to visit the Avola as we made our way to the English vessel. Captain Tugwell rigged his sea ladder for us at the gangway, and received Uncle Zene with great ceremony, as the grizzled, old Yankee skipper came over the rail. He nodded to Tom, and me as well, and took in Jonas, Joe Wing, and Manuel with a keen and curious glance that evidenced he was interested in us as whaling material. I heard him say to Captain Bourne, as they walked the deck a little later:

"I would not have believed, sir, that your crew could out-pull mine! And I confess I cannot understand it!"

Uncle Zene was bland and soothing as sweet oil. To be sure he had a right to be because he had captured the bull:

"Don't let that stick in your crop, Captain Tugwell," said he, "I'm glad it isn't to do over again. I calculate it might come out different."

Tugwell smiled in his beard, and was mightily consoled by this admission, but at the same time I knew perfectly well that the tough downeaster would have died before he let the issue "come out different."

Tom Morrison was taken in charge by the English fourth mate, and we foremast hands were ushered to the forecastle by the other boat crew. Close at hand they turned out to be bluff, hearty Colonial Englishmen. All had been born in Australia, and followed a seafaring career since they began to work. They had cruised among the islands of the South Seas on traders, and pearlers, and whalers, until the archipelago was an open book to them. Had they possessed the gift to tell their stories to the world, their experiences would have made Melville and Stevenson tame in comparison. One of them, a handsome, athletic fellow, ran away from a German trading schooner on the Solomon islands, and lived

among the cannibals for three months, saving his life a dozen times by nerve and quick-wittedness, until at the last he was forced to put to sea in an egg-shell of a canoe. He paddled, sailed, and drifted ten days, and was picked up by a Spanish trader. The captain of this craft was a demon incarnate, and the cast-away found he had apparently exchanged the frying pan for the fire, so one night he launched his canoe again, after breaking the skull of the man on anchor watch who tried to detain him. This time he was discovered, lying helpless and insane from hunger and thirst, in the bottom of his tiny craft by a homeward-bound American whaler. He reached New Bedford that trip, but shipped in the Mary a week after arriving in port, and went to New Zealand hump-backing. Thence to Sydney, where everybody hailed him as one born again.

I don't know what they had to eat in the cabin, but our dinner was no great improvement on the Avola bill of fare. The only thing that seemed to be added in honor of the occasion was plum duff. We spent the balance of the afternoon on the Martha, and I rather imagined that the Sydney skipper broached more than one bottle down below. Captain

Bourne was steady as a clock when we started back, but Tugwell had a sheet in the wind as he stood at the rail to bid us farewell. The vessels separated the next day, and that was the last time we ever met.

We continued cruising in this vicinity for the next three months, and at the end of that period had some five hundred barrels of oil under our hatches. This was doing very well as such things went, but it did not satisfy Uncle Zene. He had a reputation for sighting whales oftener than any man out of New England, and they were not coming fast enough to suit his views. So he decided to run into a small harbor he knew of on the skirts of the Philippines, called Salla Baboo, renew his supply of water, get some fresh fruit and vegetables, and bear away for the New Ireland ground, where he once before had been successful.

When we arrived we found the bark Java, out of New Bedford, lying there. We dropped anchor within a couple of ship lengths of her, and the captains immediately got together to exchange news. The Java had been out three years and had some thirteen hundred barrels of oil. She was a ramshackly old craft, many degrees worse than the Avola, and I learned

from Tom Morrison that her stores were in such bad condition that the crew could hardly eat the bread, which was weevilly, or the rusty pork and beef. Consequently they were unruly and discontented, and many of them would have deserted if they had been where they could have done so to advantage, in spite of the fact that the oil in her hold meant considerable money in their lays. Captain Taylor was having a pretty hard time of it, though the condition of the ship and its supplies were due to no fault of his. It seemed the short-sighted owners had sent the Java to sea with a lot of damaged supplies without taking Captain Taylor into their confidence, and now he was bearing the brunt of their sins. He considered this hard lines, and was dissatisfied with the situation. Although he was forced to make the best of matters to win out, he was decidedly inclined to sympathize with his ill-used ship's company, although he dared not let them know it.

Before we had been at Salla Baboo twenty-four hours we saw a good deal of the Java's crew, and heard all I have been telling you, and more. I fancy Uncle Zene was sorry he had come in, although he sympathized with

Captain Taylor, whom he considered a good man in an unwarranted predicament. He realised, however, that it was bad for the *morale* of our crew to be mixing so intimately with one in such bad shape as that of the Java. The Old Man warned us before making port to be careful in our dealings with the natives, for they were a mean and treacherous race. There was a small settlement of them hard by our anchorage, and they came freely to the ship, but our officers would allow none of the foremast hands to go ashore unless in a party in charge of one of the aftergang. These natives seemed to be some wild race of Malay origin, and were a villainous looking set of wretches, not comparable in any degree with the Bugis of Celebes.

It rained heavily the third night we were there, and the next morning we dropped all our sails in order to let them dry and prevent the canvas from rotting. The Java followed suit. Even in this simple matter it was observable that her sailors worked unwillingly, and in a slovenly way, very different from the smart manner in which the Avola-ites did their duty.

The weather was unsettled, and at four bells—10 a. m.—a terrific squall came down

with the suddenness of a thunderbolt. It came in right off the sea, and caught us flat aback, with all that canvas exposed. We had only the starboard anchor down, and the bottom was sandy and gave no hold to the flukes that was any use in such an emergency, so away we went stern first ashore. Luckily there were no rocks, and the beach had a steep pitch, so that about all the harm we did was to poke the rudder, which stuck out straight amidships, well into the sand. During the scene of wild activity that ensued I had time to see the unfortunate old Java also torn loose from her moorings, and driven broadside on to the shore, a few hundred feet below where we were pounding. I also noticed that the natives had swarmed down like ants, and were tearing along the strand, and eagerly crowding around her.

Our officers were at their stations by this time, and the Old Man, in his undershirt, took charge of matters. He was steady as a rock, and gave his orders with a clearness and precision that brought order out of chaos in a moment, and incidentally made us feel that nothing had happened that could not readily be put right. He set the port watch stowing the

canvas forward, and the starboard gang doing the same at the main, and all in a quiet and orderly manner. The wind continued to blow with great force, and as we of the starboard watch came down from aloft, his quick glance told him the Java was not getting her canvas in as handily as she should, and that her position, broadside on, put her in a dangerous dilemma. He did not hesitate a moment, but ordered Mr. Haveron to get the forward boat in the water and take his watch to the assistance of Captain Taylor. Then he went aft with Mr. Stoddard and closely examined our own situation. He seemed perfectly satisfied, and even took the trouble to tell us that no harm had been done by the casting away of the bark. As soon as the tide served in a couple of hours we would kedge the Avola off into deep water again.

In the meantime, by the assistance of Mr. Haveron and our draft of men, the Java had succeeded in rolling up her sails and pointing her yards to the wind. I heard after that the natives had begun to swarm aboard as our men arrived, but Captain Taylor knocked one persistent chap back on the beach with a belaying pin, and after that the others had come to the

conclusion the Java was still able to take care of herself.

After the fashion of squalls in those latitudes, the wind fell as abruptly as it had arisen, and we were all right again except that our ships were on shore instead of afloat. Captain Taylor brought out his last bottle of square face, and spliced the main brace as far as the lucky port watch was concerned, and they returned in high feather to the Avola. Then there was nothing more vital to do than to kill time until the tide rose sufficiently to put the captain's plan for floating her into operation. A kedge, weighing about four hundred pounds, was broke out of the hold, and lowered gingerly on the thwart of the boat. This was ferried out a cable's length broad off from where we lay. It was hove overboard, and the cable brought back to the windlass. Then the right bower, which had dragged, was hove short and got aboard. By this time the tide, running in like a mill race, was high enough in Uncle Zene's opinion to begin operations.

The men manned the windlass brakes. Mr. Fletcher, the negro third mate, with the second bass voice, took his station at the bitts, and when the Old Man sung out cheerily:

"Boost her out of this, lads!"
Fletcher tuned up:

"I'm goin' to Looseyanna
For to see my Maryanna!"

Then we all thundered in chorus:

"To my Ranzo, Ranzo, Ray-ay!"

And the brakes pumped in unison like mad. Fletcher came again with deep earnestness:

"Yes! I'm goin' to Looseyanna
For to hug my Maryanna!"

And the chorus:

"To my Ranzo, Ranzo, Ray-y-y-y!"

The Old Man raised his hand. The ship had not stirred.

"Take both the port boats, Mr. Haveron, hitch on to the bowsprit, and see if you can't give us a tow. I'm afraid that kedge will drag if we put any more strain on it."

Away they went, and we of the starboard watch handled the brakes without help. But we were able to, for the next effort made the bark quiver, and another pull brought the rudder out of the sand, and hurrah! we slid out

smoothly from the shore. The port watch came aboard, and we let go both anchors this time, and once more the Avola was in her native element.

We had all thought the Java in much worse case than ourselves, but, as events turned out, hers was also an exceptionally fortunate casting away. Her keel had luckily not caught the sand at all. Only her bilge lay on it. At a little higher stage of the tide she came off with less trouble than we.

The next day we filled and rafted off the last of our water casks, and after Uncle Zene had bought a couple of tons of yams and a lot of fruit, we went to sea. We left the Java there. She never showed up again in New Bedford, nor was she spoken after we saw her. Her fate is one of the numberless mysteries the ocean holds the key to.

CHAPTER TEN

WE dawdled along under cruising canvas, keeping a general southeasterly course. Signs of whales were abundant, and the Old Man was continually on the alert. The masthead lookouts were stimulated by the offered prize of a pound of ship's tobacco to the man who first saw a spout, but day after day passed and the welcome call never came down to the deck. This cruising for whales and not getting them is tedious work, and I was delighted one morning, when the starboard watch was on deck, and the wind had completely failed, to find the Avola had drifted so close to an island—I afterward knew it to be one of the New Hebrides—that the wavelets could be seen breaking on the beach of white sand, and the cocoanut groves in full view tossing their plumed heads in the air. A little after sunrise, when canoes were observed gathering along the water's edge with the evident intention of coming out to the ship, the port watch forbore their

sleep to remain on deck, and enjoy the sensation.

When the sun hung an hour high, a fleet of canoes approached the ship. They differed from the South sea craft I had seen, and though they were really canoes in that they were dug—or rather burned—out of a single log, they were much larger than those we had hitherto known. Ten, or even fifteen paddlers went to each craft in addition to the loads of fruit and other articles they were bringing for purposes of barter.

The Old Man had come on deck and was surveying the flotilla through his antique telescope. Presently he called Mr. Stoddard, the second mate, who was in charge of the deck, and said:

"There must be a couple of hundred niggers there, Mr. Stoddard, and they want to trade. But these New Hebrides natives haven't the best reputation, and it's just as well to be on the safe side. Don't let more than ten of them aboard at once, and gather the balance under the stern. We'll use a long-handled scoop net to lift up our purchases. I guess somebody had better stand by with my double-barreled gun in

case of trouble. Send that Long Island Ned aft. He can shoot, I've heard.

"Aye, aye, sir!"

The captain brought up his gun—an old-fashioned muzzle loader and a powder horn that had possibly done duty in the revolutionary war, with a handful of duck shot. He had some doubt about the efficacy of the latter, and I finally manufactured some wicked slugs out of a handy section of lead pipe. I loaded the fusee, and took my station on top of the after-house. By this time the canoes had dashed along side, the natives yelling and splashing their paddles. At first they unceremoniously tried to climb up the Avola's sides and over the rail. But Stoddard, Morrison, and the boatsteerers put a stop to that after permitting the foremost ten to come on deck. The balance took the prohibition good-naturedly, although they attempted to evade the vigilance of the officers until they found the effort of no avail.

I did not wonder the Old Man was backward about giving them any rope, for they were a wild and savage-looking set of heathen. A breech clout of grass blades strung on cocoanut husk twine was their sole garment, and their thin arms and legs were of ape-like length.

Their hair was arranged in a striking fashion, entirely new to me. It had in the first place—as appeared in the light of subsequent knowledge—been killed by the application of quicklime, made by burning coral. Then the hair, resembling untarred hemp oakum after the treatment, was divided into ridges running fore and aft from the forehead to the nape of the neck. Each furrow was tinted a different gorgeous hue, so that some of their noddles rivalled the solar spectrum, and contained all the primary colors. The ornamentation seemed to be affected mainly by the young bucks, and to be attributable to their inordinate vanity.

Those who were permitted the privilege of coming aboard were perfectly amazed by their new surroundings, and it was evident they had never before had so close a glimpse of the wonderful winged canoe of the White Man. It was also quickly apparent they were born thieves, for they attempted to filch every article taking their fancy—which was capacious—in the most naive way. Fortunately their scanty attire made it difficult for them to conceal anything about their persons. Had they been fitted out with pockets they would have filled them in a jiffy. As it was they were compelled to give

up, with scant regard to their feelings, whatever they took. They did not mind this, and had not the remotest notion of being ashamed of their share in the transaction. I saw one powerful fellow stoop and furtively attempt to pull up the iron ring bolt at the corner of the main hatch. He nearly tore his arms out in the effort, but naturally did not succeed, as the ring was secured by a clamp on the other side of the deck beam.

Another native, who had a white rooster—for sale—under his arm, was attracted by Jonas' tin dish, a new one. Jonas had washed it after breakfast and put it on top of the scrap cooler to dry. The rays of the sun scintillated brilliantly on the radiant tin and fired the savage soul with a desire of immediate possession. He glanced aft—nobody was observing him. He quickly gathered that royal appanage to his breast with his right hand, the left being occupied with chanticleer. Once secure of his prize, he made a leap for the rail aft of the fore rigging. His intention was, no doubt, to escape overboard and swim straightway ashore, enriched to the end of his days with his new possession. Unfortunately for the success of his project, Jonas had his eye on

him. When the marauder got his head and shoulders over the side—his natural agility being hampered by the need of holding on the pan and cock—the Yankee grabbed a stick of fire wood from the cook's store in the deck pot, and leaning outboard with his left hand clinging to the fore swifter, he menaced the darky's brilliant crop of wool. The fellow gave a screech and dropped the pan on deck. Jonas fell back, and the detected thief made a clean breach overboard, breaking water ten yards away. The rooster was gasping, and, no doubt, wishing he was a duck.

In the meantime trading over the stern had been going on under the supervision of Captain Bourne. Big Anton had the scoop net, with a twelve-foot handle, and when the skipper by means of signs made the occupants of a canoe comprehend he was willing to exchange one fish hook, or a piece of rusty, worn-out hoop-iron six inches long, or a tenth of a small plug of tobacco for a bunch of bananas, or a string of fifteen or twenty green cocoa nuts, the bargain was eagerly accepted. Then Uncle Zene, wise in his generation, and a good trader, would direct Anton to haul up the fruit. Afterwards he would carefully stick the hook (three

dozen for ten cents) in the mesh of a rope-yarn of the scoop, and fulfill his part of the bargain like an honest man. But the natives had lots of fruit, and yams, and taro, and other things the captain of the Avola needed, for the ship's fare had been salt horse and hard tack for a long period. Therefore, after a time he grew impatient of this tedious mode of exchange, and took a sudden resolution.

"Lower away the starboard boat!" he sung out.

His crew had it in the water in ten seconds, and stood by for orders. I handed the artillery to Mr. Stoddard, and was with them.

"Jump in the crew! Mr. Stoddard, get two or three of the hands. Give them each a loaded musket from the companion rack, but don't let them show noses unless you see cause in the action of the blacks. Do not let any more aboard."

He stepped in the boat, and it at once fell back into the midst of the fleet of canoes under the stern of the Avola. The bark was without steerage way, and boat and canoes were alike stationary. This move pleased the natives, and they crowded around until the whale boat was encompassed three or four deep. The crew—

each on his thwart—sat looking on, and the Old Man began trading. He had brought a supply of merchandise in the loose breast of his jumper, and as he concluded a transaction, the fruit, or whatever he had bought, was handed to me, and I deposited it in the vacant place in the stern sheets. All went smoothly, and the men, at first a little uneasy, began to enjoy the experience and exult in the large quantities of fresh "chuck" the Old Man was laying in at such favorable rates.

A dicker for a number of strings of green cocoanuts had just been concluded when it suddenly struck me that although we had been buying those nuts by the score, the space in the stern sheets did not grow proportionately fuller. The realization came upon me with the abruptness of an unexpected slap in the face, and in a flash of conviction I caught on to the fact that the boat was being robbed.

I turned to Uncle Zene who was already intent upon securing another lot, and immersed in his own part of the business, utterly unsuspicious of foul play. On each side of the boat the canoes crowded, and my sharpened eye-sight now detected war clubs and spears partially concealed in the dunnage in the bottom

of some of them. The craft nearest were emptied of fruit, their cargoes having been purchased. The empty canoes did not haul out, and the last purchases were passed from dug-out to dug-out until delivered. This consignment came over the port side. The nuts were strung in bunches, making a cumbrous package to handle. As rapidly as I received each lot I dropped it behind me, and—because I was facing port—out of my line of vision. The Old Man also had his back to the starboard side, and the rest of the crew—delighted as school boys on a holiday—were skylarking, and trying to talk to the grinning natives. I began to understand. Without making my suspicion apparent I kept an eye out behind me. Presently one of the natives in the sold out canoe next to the whale boat on the starboard side reached over furtively, and abstracted a string of nuts I had just tossed on the pile. I managed to keep the string in sight without detection, and in mingled wonder and amusement I saw it passed from one to the other adroit thief until it got around to the port side, and was bought again by Uncle Zene, and handed to me.

I lost no time in informing the captain what was going on, though I managed to convey the news so the blacks were unaware their little game was discovered. The Old Man looked serious a moment, and then said:

"Don't let on you've noticed, and pass the word quietly to stand by, but to take no notice till I'm ready."

While I was diplomatically discharging this commission the captain appeared to discover he had run out of the fish hooks and tobacco with which he was paying cash down on the nail. As soon as he had impressed this on the minds of the savages he looked around to the Avola. The fleet of canoes, and the whale boat in its midst had drifted a couple of ships' lengths away, and in the imminence of trouble the keen-witted old skipper had hit upon a means of reducing the distance without arousing the suspicions of the rapacious rascals.

"Bark ahoy! Mr. Stoddard!" he hailed. "Bring up some tobacco and fish hooks from my after cabin, and lower them down to me in that scoop net."

In a moment the savages saw the treasure-laden scoop descending, and naturally as pos-

sible the fleet accompanied the whale boat until it was once more under the counter, and the protection of the Avola.

"Now," said uncle Zene as he received the articles, "stand by for squalls. These niggers have been stealing out of our boat, and I'm going to give them a lesson. Are the muskets ready?"

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the second mate, cool as a cucumber on ice. "Give me one minute."

He disappeared in the companion way opening off the binnacle. The next moment four men, each with a loaded gun, lounged to the taffrail:

"All ready, sir," reported Stoddard. "Touch off your trouble as soon as you please."

"Ned," said the Old Man to me, "as soon as you catch that black thief at work again, let him have your paddle over his head as hard as you know how. Don't be afraid of hurting him."

I nodded silently, and gave the hardwood paddle a shove with my foot so it lay within easy reach. The men heard all this, and they too kept their eyes on their paddles, and waited expectantly. The blacks had allowed this

preparation to pass under their untutored noses, and had no premonition. The Old Man resumed trading unconcernedly, and the cocoa nuts, yams, taro, and bananas began to circulate towards the whale boat again.

A different formation of the flotilla had resulted when it moved under the Avola's stern, and the canoes surrounding the boat were laden instead of empty. It took some time—possibly five minutes—before conditions became ripe for a repetition of the sharp practice. During the interval the boat was not allowed to drift apart from the bark, the skipper directing the crew to take an occasional stroke with the paddles to retain the desired proximity. This order gave us an excuse for keeping the paddles in our fists.

At last the same man who had been working the game got into the position he had previously occupied. He was a lean, wiry fellow, alert in manner, and with intelligent features. He imagined his opportunity had arrived, and leaning over took a palm leaf basket of taro from the whale boat. It weighed fifteen or twenty pounds, and as he straightened to lift it over the gunwale the cranky craft in which he sat with eight other natives tipped so the

water came almost level with the side. At that instant I swung my four foot ashen paddle. I brought the broad side of the heavy blade down on his bushy head with a hearty good will that fairly knocked him out of the canoe. His thatch of hair lessened the impact of the blow. It would have been more effective to have struck on his bare carcase. As it was, he was not even stunned—except by surprise at the unexpectedness of retribution. He dove like an otter beneath the whale boat, and emerged behind the line of canoes on the farther side.

The sudden blow was like a stage bell, and rang up the curtain. Before the thief had appeared above water Stoddard and his four men cocked and leveled their guns at the huddled fleet of canoes. At the same instant each man of the starboard boat crew brandished his paddle, and prepared to break the head of the nearest black. Uncle Zene had a heavy Colt navy in his hand, and was awaiting the outcome, ready for desperate action should the occasion call for it.

No one of us had the least notion—save possibly the Old Man—of how the cat would jump. The inhabitants of these islands were reputed

to be treacherous and bloodthirsty; therefore in spite of our preparedness we awaited the sequel to the blow with hearts beating more rapidly than ordinarily.

There had been a startled exclamation from the blacks who saw the blow fall, but it is probable that out of the mob of a hundred and fifty natives not more than eight or ten realized on the instant what had happened, although I suspect most of them were aware of the stealing, and in collusion with it. Among these there was an uneasy pause after the first involuntary cry, and when they perceived the uninjured culprit bob up from the water gasping, and as yet scarcely aware of the cause of his immersion, they burst into loud cries which were apparently explanatory, for the next moment followed a roar of unsympathizing merriment at the discomfiture of their detected comrade.

Uncle Zene's revolver disappeared. The strained faces, and bunched muscles of the crew relaxed, and we joined joyfully in the laughter. A glance at the Avola showed no sign of armed and frowning defiance. The curtain had been rung down.

CHAPTER XI

A COUPLE of days after the adventure recorded in the last chapter, the ever-welcome hail came down from the masthead:

"Thar she blows! Thar she blows! Thar she blows! Thar she blows!"

All hands appeared on deck with the alacrity of children preparing for a Sunday school picnic. It was Mr. Fletcher who had raised the spouts but now the others on lookout took up the call, and it was apparent to us on deck that a school of whales was in sight. In a moment Captain Bourne, who had come from below as if shot out of a gun, sung out:

"What do you make of them, Mr. Fletcher? It sounds pretty good!"

"School of sperm whales, sir, about four miles off on the weather bow. Twenty or thirty of them, sir, from the spouts!"

"That's hearty," returned the Old Man. "Brace the main yard!"

All hands were on deck and we braced the

yards sharp so that the Avola could lay a course heading for the whales. The wind was light, and we made slow progress, but the school remained in sight despite our fears to the contrary. Nevertheless it seemed hours before the order came to lower the boats. We were not a mile from the whales when it did. The captain said to the officers before lowering:

"Get on to them whales as easy as you know how. When you are close, paddle. Don't make any noise, or you're liable to galley them. When you're among 'em all work together, and each strike a cow. If they've got calves with them be sure you don't get your iron into one of them, or you're liable to have a stove boat. Lower away!"

Away we went in a bunch. Mindful of the captain's warning there was no haste, and we regulated our speed by each other's for the purpose was to attack the whales at the same moment so the school would not be frightened before all the boats were fast. The first mate's boat led slightly, and when he arrived within a quarter mile of them he said softly to his crew:

"Peak oars, and take your paddles. If any

of you hit the side of the boat, or make a racket in any other way, I'll knock his fool head off, and stick a boat bucket on instead!"

We others followed suit, and the four boats silently swept down on the unsuspecting school, which had no more idea of danger being imminent than a parson at a tea party. It was the first time I had ever approached a whale facing forward, so I could see every thing that took place.

It seemed as if a ten acre patch of the ocean was packed with the huge black bodies of these sea monsters. They rolled around, and spouted, and nosed each other in a social way, and it made me feel as if we were viewing an aquarium with the whales disporting themselves in a prodigious tank for the benefit of the spectators. I observed a number, at least a dozen, of the mammals were only from ten to twenty feet long. Tom Morrison whispered:

"Its a herd of cows and calves. Those little fellows are suckling the mothers yet."

These mothers suckled their babies just as the true bovine mother does, and presently Tom pointed out one that was feeding. It nuzzled the cow whale with its nose as you have seen a calf do in the stable to its mother.

There was no bull in the school, Morrison said. It was probably twenty or even thirty miles away, for a bull whale does not often condescend to remain any length of time with his wives. It is one of the mysteries pertaining to the whale that he is always able to communicate over miles of water with his cows.

Our boats spread out to a distance of fifty yards apart to minimize the danger of interference, and we gently paddled in among those whales. They did not seem to notice us, and on all sides I could see their great backs almost rubbing the boat, and their huge heads nearly within reach. The officers watched Mr. Haveron—they had laid their plans on the way—and when he motioned old Joe, his black Cape de Verde boatsteerer to stand up, they followed suit.

The next moment four harpoons were driven home, and the four boats were fast each to a fifty or sixty barrel cow. I anticipated prompt annihilation in these close quarters, but to my surprise nothing of the kind I had expected occurred. The stricken whales appeared more bewildered than enraged, and though they plunged around in disorder at the prick of the irons they did not immediately sound, nor take

out line at any great rate. Their companions seemed to realize something was wrong and the harpooned ones in trouble, for they ranged along side of their wounded comrades, and shouldered them in sympathy. The calves were more obstreperous, and swam hither and thither at top speed.

Now I became aware that Morrison had exchanged places with Joe Fayal, and was standing knee in clumsy cleat, and lance in hand. A large cow came near, and at a distance of ten feet he hurled his death-dealing weapon into her, forward of the fin, and it penetrated a fathom into her breast. She shuddered, and the next instant a shower of bloody spray and vapor came out of her spout hole, and besprinkled us in the boat. Morrison hauled his lance back as another whale brushed by us, and darted again. I don't know what was happening in the other boats during this period, but I was told afterward each officer tried to kill a victim with lance whenever he felt certain of inflicting a fatal wound. I seemed to see red spouts arising on every side of me, and the atmosphere was a wall of bloodstained fog. Now the wounded whales, maddened by the pain of the lance thrusts, began to rush wildly

about. Twice we would have been run down if Fayal Joe had not dextrously swung the boat in time to save us. The whale we were fast to decided to seek the bottom, and the line began to whir out of the tub, and forward between the chocks in the nose of the boat.

Altogether it was getting about as lively as any one could desire. I like excitement, but that time I had my fill, and the next moment brought the climax. Some whale, I don't know which one for I had lost track of them as individuals, got its flukes neatly under the bow of our boat. I say bow, but from what ensued the tail must have extended under nearly half the length of the boat. I saw it, and held my breath, while Morrison leaned over, and pushed about ten feet of his lance into the side of that whale, pulled it out by the haft, and churned it in again in what I suppose seemed to him a more promising place.

Then came the catastrophe! I had been vaguely expecting death, but could not conjecture in what shape it would finally come. I did not know whether the heavens had fallen, or I had gone up to meet them. It turned out to be the latter. The great whale, an eighty barrel cow, made an easy gesture with her

flukes, as one would flip his finger, and up went the starboard boat and its crew in the air. Reflection has since convinced me it did not ascend more than thirty feet above the surface of the sea, but it seemed then higher than the royal pole, and that's a hundred easily. There was skill as well as vigor in that toss for when the boat reached the highest point it gently turned end for end, and upside down. We all came flying forth at different angles, like pigeons from a dove cote. The fourth mate was thrown farthest as he deserved, for I shall always believe it was that last vicious thrust of his that precipitated the calamity. The bow, midship, and tub oarsmen came next, and Fayal Joe and myself fell nearly perpendicularly, within an ace of landing on the body of the monster who had caused the trouble. As I instinctively struck out to prevent myself from sinking my hand hit the whale's body, and I withdrew it as from a lion's mouth.

I had no time to think about that however. The next thing I knew there was a smack on the bosom of the ocean nearby, and the flemish coil of line out of the forward tub landed by us. Please remember there was a whale fast to the end of this line, and that he was headed for

China, and travelling at about the rate of twenty knots. That infernal coil did not immediately sink, as would have been expected, but began to break apart, and distribute flakes all around through the serene blue waves. I could see the leading part being drawn down by the pull of the whale, and felt in my very soul that to be caught in one of those fatal coils meant a death about as unpleasant, and sudden, as one could devise. I was digging away from this as fast as I could, and thanking my stars I was a good swimmer, while Fayal Joe kept right up with me.

It takes a long time to describe a happening so complicated as this. It all occurred in about ten seconds. I am sure Joe and I hold the world record for the distance we swam in that time. We were fifty or sixty yards away from the whale, and saw something else that was interesting, though too close at hand to be pleasant. That whale, the same that overturned the boat, reached around with her flukes. It reminded me of a person feeling for something that he could not see! There seemed to be sensitory nerves in her tail, for when the corner of her flukes came in contact with the capsized boat, she lifted them, gave

them a gentle wave in the air, and brought them down like a pile driver on the starboard boat—and there was nothing but kindling wood left. After demolishing the boat the cow sprung at once into her flurry, and there were two more not far away also in their death throes. I got them all mixed up, and was unable to tell one from the other.

In the midst of this intense action I had not been able to keep track of the other three boats, but now I saw they were near-by, and in good shape. Stoddard, who was nearest, found opportunity to pick up the starboard boat whale line, and fasten a drag or buoy to it so that the whale would not be lost. It struck me with admiration that in the midst of such a turmoil a man should so preserve his coolness and presence of mind. It was characteristic of the class to which he belonged. The breed was there to begin with, and the training fostered an intelligent hardihood hardly conceivable by the average man.

The whales had worked away from us, or perhaps we should be given some credit for the fact that we were no longer in close proximity, and I began to return to my normal frame of mind. It is amazing how quickly one becomes

accustomed to the most unusual surroundings, and I actually began to feel at home in my novel situation, and wonder what would be the end of it. I saw Morrison and Jonas about a ship's length away, and as there seemed nothing more urgent I went over to them. They could both swim, and were making good weather of it. Manuel, the bow oar, like many of his countrymen, was not much of a water dog, and was keeping up with unnecessary effort, although the density of the ocean was such that it made it almost impossible to sink if one had any notion of supporting himself. I saw an oar tossing on top of a wave in the distance, and secured it for him. After that he was easier in his mind, though no safer than before. By this I myself began to have some curiosity about the length of time it was probable we would remain floating around, and I said to the fourth mate:

"When will they pick us up?"

"When they get their whales killed," he replied. "Unless they have some trouble finding the ones we lanced. Of course they will attend to that first. They won't bother about us until they are through their work."

This goes to show the point of view of a

whaleman is different from that of the average citizen, and I made some remark of the kind to Morrison. I think he hardly understood what I was driving at, for he only said:

"Why should they mess around about us? We'd only be in the way in the boats. We'll be all right enough *if the sharks don't show up,* and the chances are against it."

"Why are the chances against it?" I asked, for this was a new and disturbing thought. I put the question rather anxiously, for my experience with that one in the Indian Ocean had made me rather timid where they were concerned.

"Why," he replied, "though they generally come about when we kill whales in these seas, they get the scent of the blood from the ones that have been lanced, and follow it right up. They don't seem to notice anything else. I suppose if they happened to run across you they'd take hold, but not otherwise."

This was not entirely reassuring to one inclined to be nervous, but I did not let on that I was not contented with the prospect. At all events, I am happy to say we did not see a fin until after we were picked up.

After all, the staunch old Avola reached us

before the boats succeeded in killing the whales they were fast to, and collecting the others that had died of lance wounds. She managed to beat up to us although the breeze was so light it took her fully two hours to make the mile or two of distance.

The result of that day's work was nine whales, and the captain credited three of them to the starboard boat, for Stoddard went after the one we had struck in the first instance, and got it after killing his own. His foresight in putting that drag on was what did the trick, and enabled him to find her, for not being touched by the lance she had the strength to "shove junk" quite a distance. Captain Bourne said one hundred and fifty barrels of oil —that was his estimate of what our cows would stow down—would pay for a number of whale boats, and anyhow he had a spare one.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THOSE nine whales kept us busy for the best part of a week. While we were trying out the blubber an incident occurred worth telling. I have explained how the horse pieces were sliced in the mincing machine, and that Big Anton was the feeder to it. It happened I had temporarily relieved the man whose regular duty it was to turn the heavy balance wheel furnishing the motive power. I noticed Anton was careless in the way he bore down on the horse pieces, and shoved them through the trough to the blade of the knife. He was a self-willed fellow and I hesitated before mentioning my views, but as he seemed in danger of an accident I finally warned him that if he were not more careful he would lose some of his fingers. The whole crew were wearied to the verge of endurance by the heavy labor of cutting in, and his temper was all on edge. He glared at me with a nasty sneer as I spoke, and at the same time pressed hard down on the piece of blubber he was guiding

into the machine. I was turning that heavy wheel, and had it going at the rate of two or three hundred revolutions a minute.

Suddenly he gave a harsh cry of mingled rage and suffering, and staggered back flourishing his right hand in the air. A fierce jet of blood shot out of it like water from a squirt gun, and bespattered the deck planks ten feet away. I dropped my wheel, and sprang to his assistance, and Tom Morrison, who was close at hand, got his arm around the man's waist. The next instant he toppled over in a dead faint, but the fourth mate and I saved him from falling. We carried him, and a great hulk of a man he was, aft to the captain on the quarter deck, and put him down with his head on a coil of rope. We were all three so covered with blood that it was for an instant doubtful to Uncle Zene which was the injured one, but it never took the Old Man long to get his wits together. Almost before we knew it he had Big Anton's right hand in a bucket of salt water that he had conjured from somewhere. Then we saw that his thumb had been sheared off close to his hand neatly as a surgeon could have done it. The blood continued to flow in intermittent spurts, and when the captain felt

his pulse, he looked grave. Without stopping to say a word he snatched the silk handkerchief from about his neck, and tied it loosely around Anton's wrist with a square knot. I recognized his intention of a tourniquet, and handed him a belaying pin as he finished. He passed it through the loop, and told me to twist it until I had stopped the flow of arterial blood:

"I'll be back in a jiffy!" he finished.

He ran down to the after cabin, and brought up a bottle, glass, bandages, and a lump of rosin large as your fist. I had tightened the tourniquet as much as I thought advisable, but he gave the pin an extra turn, and handed me the rosin, saying:

"Put that in a piece of canvas, and pound it to a powder without losing any. It's to put on his thumb. It beats cobwebs. Give me your sheath knife."

I handed it to him, and with Tom's assistance he pried the big fellow's clenched teeth apart, and poured a stiff jolt of raw brandy down his throat. Anton strangled, gasped, and spluttered. Then he opened his eyes, and weakly tried to rise. The Old Man pressed him down gently, saying:

"Stay there, you blamed fool. I'll have you all right in a moment."

I handed him the powdered rosin, and Morrison held up the hand while the captain put as much of the powder on the broad stump as it would hold. Then he took the bandage roll, and swathed it neatly and securely as a doctor could have done.

I may as well tell the rest of Big Anton's story while I'm about it. This misfortune made him almost useless as a sailor although the wound healed marvellously. He was of no service aloft, for he had not grip enough to hang on in a tight place, and the loss of that thumb seemed to incapacitate him for almost every thing except steering and lookout. I never before realized what a handicap the loss of a thumb is, although I had read of it in the Old Testament. Anyhow his uselessness and helplessness took all the heart out of poor Anton. From being a bold, aggressive fellow, and a bit of a bully, he became a whining, querulous invalid entirely out of place in a ship's crew. The Old Man discharged him in Singapore a year later, and the consul sent him home to New Bedford, where he had kin. But

he died on the passage—of heart disease, I heard—and that was the end of him. Such is a sailor's career.

We put in several months cruising on these New Ireland grounds. It was easy, loafing work, for we were always under shortened canvas, and in the intense watch for whales the ordinary tasks the officers were so ingenious in providing to tide us over dull times were neglected. An occasional pull on the halliards, and now and then a shift of the braces, apart from the wheel and lookouts, made the sum of our duties when we did not have whales in sight. It became very tedious in time, and almost any break in the monotony was welcomed, and that reminds me that we experienced an earthquake one day.

I was at the wheel. We had a five knot breeze, and were sliding along over a smooth sea, for a wonder out of sight of the coast of New Ireland, which we had been hugging for weeks. The Old Man was leaning against the binnacle, and was about to speak to me when the Avola gave a shiver like a wounded whale. The rigging quivered and shook, and as our eyes met, a grating, rumbling noise passed along the keel. I dropped my wheel like a hot

brick, and leaping to the rail, gazed over the stern, expecting to see some discoloration in the water to show where we had scraped the bottom. The Old Man's grizzled head bobbed alongside of me as I searched the surface, and he drew a long breath of relief as he saw the wave was deeply blue as always.

"Go back to your wheel, Ned," he said, "I guess it's nothing but an earthquake!"

The Old Man's sense of proportion did not correspond with mine. Nothing but an earthquake! Nevertheless when he explained that these events were not uncommon, and ordinarily harmless, and that he had experienced two previously, I was obliged to confess that it was easier to contemplate one than it was to run the bark on a reef.

It was about this time we all began to take notice something was amiss with Portuguese John, the second mate's boatsteerer. He was a slight, elderly man, almost black, but with clean cut, delicate features that denied the presence of negro blood. He was probably of Moorish descent, and a certain personal fastidiousness that he managed to maintain even in the close companionship unavoidable in such a life as ours, confirmed the impression that

eastern rather than Latin blood ran in his veins. He was reputed to be a more experienced whaleman than even the Old Man, and his countrymen in the forecastle regarded him with a respect that was near to reverence. John was courteous in manner, although silent and reserved. Stoddard regarded him as the best man in a boat he had ever lowered with. I had heard from the beginning of the voyage that John was devout in mind, and framed his daily life on religious principles.

We noticed John was forming a habit of talking to himself. His lips moved constantly when he was not occupied in some task that engrossed him, and he made the sign of the cross so frequently it seemed automatic. One night when I had started to the scuttle butt for a drink, I almost fell over John on his knees in the waist. He did not notice me, though I stood out plain in the moonlight, but went on waving his arms on high, and talking in a rapid, monotonous voice that had earnest supplication in its tones. I drew back, and met Morrison at the vice bench. He beckoned me, and we went forward of the windlass, out of hearing of the watch.

"You saw him, didn't you?" he asked. "It's

queer, and I don't know what's got into old John. He's been at this two days every chance he gets. He's as good a man as ever broke blackskin, but I fear he's turning soft."

We talked the matter over, and at my suggestion the fourth mate agreed to tell the facts to the captain, and let him take action if he thought necessary. The next night Morrison told me he had informed Uncle Zene about John, and the captain advised to take no notice. He thought it religious mania, and it might, or might not prove serious.

No one could have foretold the strange and tragic ending of old John's queerness, and I may as well relate it here, although the circumstances occurred some days after.

Mr. Fletcher raised the whale in the morning watch. It was a lone bull breaching a long distance to the windward. It took the bluff-bowed Avola three hours to beat up where the lonely monarch could be seen from deck. Fletcher scanned the whale long and closely, while it lay spouting. Suddenly he hailed the deck:

"I never seen a sperm bull like this one, Captain Bourne. He's queer, and no mistake!"

The Old Man, pacing his quarter as usual like a penned animal, paused in his stride, and looked inquiringly aloft:

"What do you make of him, sir?"

"I'm blowed if he's a protestant!" replied Fletcher, with a brief chuckle. "He's marked with a cross on his head."

Portugee John, who stood by the new starboard boat near Uncle Zene, gave a convulsive start as the whale was described, and seemed about to speak, but he restrained himself. Fletcher continued:

"Seems like the cross was painted on with white lead. The long streak goes from the nose to the hump, and the cross bar reaches clear athwart his head."

Captain Bourne happened to glance at the boatsteerer, and to his surprise John's swarthy face had turned the dull blue which takes the place of emotional paleness in men of his complexion.

"What is it, John?" he asked in surprise.

The boatsteerer's voice was husky, and he shivered as he answered, pointing in the direction of the whale:

"Sacred Ben, sir, the Whale of the Cross!"

"Hey!" exclaimed the Old Man with an ex-

pression of deep interest. "I've heard of him. He's got a bad record!"

Portugee John moved nearer, and laid his unsteady hand on the master's arm.

"Capitan," he said in a strained whisper, "that whale mean Death! He kill my broth' three year ago in the Indian Ocean, and many more! He stove three boats of the Mary, and get away with four irons, an' all the lines. I know, for I was there! My broth', Anton, he steer Misser Brown, the mate, an' all that boat crew Sacred Ben he kill. And many more! I hear of him in other ships. *He always kill, and always get away!*"

"I heard something of the Mary losing her boats. I was in the Okhotsk that year," replied Uncle Zene. "Well, what of it, John?"

"Capitan, for Christ his sake, do not lower after the Whale of the Cross!"

The sailor in Uncle Zene quaked a moment because of the superstition begot by the sea. Then the tough, Yankee spirit of the old New England whale hunter surged up in his breast:

"Sacred Ben will try out like any other whale, I reckon!" he grimly said.

John made the sign of his faith. He saw the skipper's jaw set, and knew the breed. With

the instinctive gesture he resigned his welfare to the care of his patron saint, and braced himself to do his duty—whatever might befall. The Old Man took his glass from the companion-way rack, and climbed the weather rigging to a height where he could see the bull plainly.

"The Whale of the Cross right enough!" he murmured when he had adjusted his focus. "I'll give him a whirl for luck!" Then he snapped his glass together, and roared: "Stand by to lower away!"

The masthead lookouts seemed to drop to the deck. The crew, on hot foot since Fletcher's first call from aloft, ranged themselves at their stations.

"Lower away all!"

The falls creaked; in a twinkle all four boats touched the water, and the men were on their thwarts. Stoddard, with Portugee John pulling the harpooner oar, was first away from the side:

"Vast pulling!" commanded the second mate. "Peak oars! Step the mast! Shake that sail loose! Throat and peak halliards hoist!"

Almost as he spoke the well-drilled men had

the mast secured, the sheet aft, and the sail took the wind.

"Drop your center board. Let her go!" he said to the midship oarsman.

Down it went, and held the boat up to the wind as Stoddard laid her head straight for Sacred Ben.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

"PULL all!" Stoddard's crew lay back on their oars, and the foam curled from the cutwater. The second mate—the only man in the boat with his face to the whale—looked out ahead with a dancing devil in his gray eye. His blood was afire with the chase. The Whale of the Cross, doughty old sea warrior as he was, had an antagonist who would tax his art and test his fighting quality. A mile—two miles—were passed, and the black bulk lay ahead, looming like a bare rock in mid ocean. His great hump was six feet above the sea. At times he spouted, sending a jet of steam and spray twenty feet in the air, and anon in the wantonness of might he thrust his huge body half above the surface with a writhe of his muscles, and falling back splintered the brine a hundred yards around.

Nearer came the boat. Portugee John, watching Stoddard's eye, saw it glow as the dancing devil leaped with madder bounds, but he never turned his head, though he knew

Sacred Ben was close aboard. Then the second mate spoke again, as he threw the boat's nose in the wind—this time in a strained whisper, that shivered along the men's nerves like an electric current:

"Take in the sail—cleverly! Down with the mast. So! Stand up, John! Pull, the rest of you! Pull hard!"

He accompanied the last order with a swing on his steering oar, and by the time John had knee in clumsy cleat and hand on iron, he was facing the Whale of the Cross, not ten feet abaft his fin. John, though dago, was grit to his toe nails, and despite his shaking hand when the whale was sighted, intended to send his harpoon home if it proved his own death warrant.

"Give it to him!"

Stoddard spoke in a fierce whisper, and with startling vehemence. The hearts of the men leaped, and they gripped oars in arrested stroke with fingers of steel that dented the ash. Portugee John's iron flashed above his head like lightning, and with a swish the barbed point sung through the air and stabbed deep in the side of Sacred Ben. Like report of gun after touch of trigger he responded. He sprang

into activity as lightly as a wild cat meets its foe.

"Starn all! For your lives starn all!" bellowed the second mate.

With their souls in the strain the crew pushed on their oars. A maelstrom of blinding foam encompassed them. Angry whirlpools spurted vicious gushes over the boat's side, and a deafening rush of waters was in John's ears, while the boat reeled and danced beneath his feet. But the latent tiger at the bottom of his heart was aroused, and he did not give back an inch. Wiping the spume from his face with his left hand, with the right he sought and grasped the second iron.

Stoddard at the stern, for a moment had a clearer view than his boatsteerer, and he cried:

"See! He's milling!"

So it was. The bull had settled in the water at the prick of the steel, and with two strokes of his fins, and a lash of his tail—which had caused the vortex—he was turning his bulk, as though on a pivot, with the effect of bringing his flukes underneath the whaleboat. Stoddard was too old a blubber hunter not to know what that meant. An upward stroke of that tremendous engine of destruction would send boat

and crew fifty feet in the air, as though thrown aloft by an exploding mine. He gave a great heave on his steering oar, and the boat whirled about. John stood, harpoon uplifted. His eyes, searching the spinning eddies in front, saw the flukes of the Whale of the Cross, curved like a bow, ascending from the depths.

Stoddard bent to his oar again, and the boat swung from the rising Death. The second mate did his utmost, but even as the bow turned the great tail came up from the sea, smoothly, silently, as though driven by some irresistible mechanical force. John gazed at the black horror in momentary paralysis, his iron raised for the second dart. Its point was caught by the corner of the fluke, and flipped, as a boy jerks his knife in mumblety peg. The harpoon turned on its axis—and John was impaled on it. In continuance of the motion the flukes rose high in air, and then sank from sight. Sacred Ben had sounded, and the line hissed over Portugee John's body through the chocks in the bow.

There is no time for horror in a whale boat. All is action. The men, scarcely realizing the tragedy, but knowing the whale to be fast, peaked their oars. Stoddard reached for the

line and tossed two flakes from the tub to give play, that he might bring it over the snubbing post in the stern sheets. It coiled through his hands like a serpent, and in the very act of accomplishing his purpose a flake leaped in the air, and, opening like the loop of a cowboy's lasso, dropped over his shoulders. For a second it seemed nothing could save him from being cut in two. By the Almighty's grace the bow oarsman happened to see the fatal loop as it fell. In a heartbeat his sheath knife flashed and the line was severed before it had time to nip. Stoddard cast the loosened coil from his body, and settled back in the stern sheets.

"I guess you saved my bacon," he said to the bow oarsman. "Now, look to John. I'm afraid this cussed Whale of the Cross has fixed him."

They turned his face to the sky, and found the harpoon he had bent against Sacred Ben had cloven his own brave heart in twain.

We in the other boats had not been able to get an iron into Sacred Ben. He seemed to have departed. Mr. Stoddard returned to the Avola with poor John's body, and the other three boats waited, hoping the Whale of the

Cross would reappear, but he must have risen to the surface too far away for us to detect. So we returned also, and arrived in time to eat dinner at the usual hour.

The Portuguese mourned greatly over the death of the old boatsteerer, and his tragic fate cast a shadow over the whole ship's company, aft as well as forward, but as things turned out we did not have much time to waste in grieving. The starboard watch finished its dinner and turned in when—

"There she white waters! There she blows!"

I bounced on deck, knowing in my heart it was Sacred Ben again, and sure enough the mate at the masthead called down in a minute to the captain with some excitement:

"It's that same whale, sir; cross and all!"

"Aye, aye," returned the Old Man, as if not surprised. "Whereabouts does he lie?"

"Two miles off. Dead to windward."

Uncle Zene nodded thoughtfully:

"Keep your eye on him, Mr. Haveron, and sing out every move he makes. I've got an account to settle with him." Then he faced forward: "All hands on deck!" We were all there. "Rip this main hatch cover off! Both of them! Mr. Stoddard, get down 'tween

decks with a gang and pick out the best sixteen barrel cask you can find. Rig a tackle, and send it on deck. Lose no time."

The second mate looked mystified, but he obeyed. He, and Morrison, and Jonas, and I were below among the empties in a jiffy, while Fletcher was getting a tackle in the rigging. We selected a sound, new cask, and got it where we could hook on. As it arose above the hatch coamings, and we scrambled out, we found Bungs, tools in hand, awaiting us. The Old Man stood over him while he drove those hoops down until the cask was as tight as a newly-corked champagne bottle. While this was doing, he told Fletcher to let the tackle remain, and directed Morrison to bring five or six fathom of new whale line. He was very much in earnest, and the others watched with deep interest to see the outcome. I smelt a scheme to bedevil Sacred Ben, and began to hope Uncle Zene would himself lower to take charge of the campaign against the tremendous fighter who had killed our shipmate. When Bungs was through the captain harnessed the cask with that line, and ended all with a becket so firmly attached it could not get adrift. He

stood off, and surveyed it carefully, and nodded in satisfaction:

"I am going to get that blasted Whale of the Cross," he said to the attentive officers. "And I don't want to lose any more men, or even a boat doing it; so I'm going to give him this cask to kind of chew on, as you might say. We'll get fast to him—if we can—and carry the line to this cask, and bend on to it. Then the boats can light out, and he can have his fun pounding the cask. I don't reckon he'll damage it so's to hurt. When he's got some of the ginger out of him, we'll try him with the lance."

There was rejoicing among the officers over the Old Man's plans, and I saw they approved of his idea. Only Mr. Stoddard looked glum, and he suddenly said:

"I want to get square on that fellow myself, and how am I going to lower without a boat-steerer?"

"I'll fix you up, sir," Uncle Zene answered. "I'm going down myself, so Mr. Morrison will steer me, and you can take Fayal Joe."

Stoddard's brow cleared, and we got the cask overboard. As the wind was light, and we

could make better time in the boats, we lowered at once. It was a heavy pull with the cask, but we hitched on tandem. An hour brought us to the neighborhood of Sacred Ben, who gambolled innocently, as if the burden of John's murder did not weigh heavily on him. The captain now ordered the other three boats to spread and come on the whale from all four points of the compass. The one lucky enough to get fast was to let the line run, and attach it to the barrel as quickly as possible. It was expected to occupy the entire attention of the Whale of the Cross, at least long enough to allow the boats to get to a safe distance.

We let the cask drift, and started for the whale when the others had gone far enough to make up for our being the nearest. Then all the boats made a "white ash" breeze, and we approached him without any attempt at concealment. The Old Man told me as we pulled that Sacred Ben was as wise a "rogue" as any elephant that ever bamboozled its hunters, and possibly had a very good idea that we were preparing to attack at the present time.

"Once in a while," he said, "a whale that has been a good deal hunted gets wise to all the tricks of the game, and if he's vicious into

the bargain, as the Whale of the Cross appears to be, he's as deadly as a gatling gun. It'll be a good thing for the whole fleet if we can stow this fellow down."

I could not avoid reflecting that Ben seemed fully as likely to stow us down as we were to perform the function on his behalf, but the captain spoke again, this time to the fourth mate:

"He's pointing this way, and I'm going to take him head on. Stand up, sir, and dart high and far!"

Of course I could not see, having my back to the whale, but this is what happened. When Morrison got up he was facing Sacred Ben's head, end on. Tom said his mouth was open, showing thirty-two teeth in the lower jaw, each a foot and a half long. (This was an exaggeration, for I afterward measured one.) He was a ship's length distant, but could not see us because his eyes were set in his head relatively as a human being's ears are, and so imbedded in flesh he cannot squint outside his direct line of vision. Stoddard was the same distance on his port side, and Fletcher on the starboard. Mr. Haveron was closer on the port side, and further down towards his flukes.

Uncle Zene gave no order to Tom, but I saw his teeth clinch, and his jaw set hard when the moment came. Then the fourth mate darted, and yelled:

"All fast, sir!"

The Old Man gave a heave on his oar that turned the whale boat in a course at right angles to the one we had held, and roared:

"NOW, blast you, PULL!!!"

We pulled. I did not know it at the time, but by the most astonishing good fortune, the three other boatsteerers all got their first irons in at the same time Morrison made fast, and there was Sacred Ben apparently in the toils. What follows came as quickly as light travels. His first move was a sidewise slash with his flukes. It caught Mr. Haveron's boat and crumpled it into a handful of sticks. One of the crew, a Flores man, was struck, and I believe he never knew what hit him. He was dead as a door nail when we picked him up, and his face was smiling as if he had died in his bed.

When the Old Man changed the course of the starboard boat, the new one brought us squarely across the line of vision of the maddened Whale of the Cross, and he seemed to

act with the intelligent ferocity of a fighting bull dog. I suppose he was not aware of Stoddard or Fletcher, or perhaps he left them till he had more time. At any rate his next move was clearly directed against us. Simultaneously with demolishing Haveron, he settled in the water, and began milling so as to turn those horrible jaws on the starboard boat, actually gnashing them. Morrison had not taken his thwart when we pulled in response to the captain's appeal. Now he (I heard all this after) cast off the lashing of a lance, and was ready to fight back, undaunted by the disproportionate size of his adversary. As Sacred Ben came around he sent the steel into his neck as far as it would go for the wooden shaft. In a second he had it back by the warp, and rammed it home again.

"Hurrah!" shouted the Old Man. "Hurrah, Tom! He cannot stand the gaff! He's sounding!"

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE Captain was right. Sacred Ben was a fighter, but when it came to serving as pin cushion with Tom Morrison's lance as pin, and the jabs penetrating his body eight or ten feet every time, he reconsidered his intention of eating our boat, and made up his mind to go below out of sight a bit, and think up some other scheme. He sounded with the earnestness characteristic of his disposition, and the line ran out like wild fire.

The second mate had started for the floating cask the moment he was sure Fayal Joe's iron would hold in the Whale of the Cross, and as we had time to take stock, Uncle Zene saw he was bending his line on to the becket prepared with so much care. When he had secured it firmly, he waved his hand to the captain, and shouted:

"If he goes much deeper, sir, he'll have to take the cask along!"

There were only about twenty fathoms of

line between the buoy and the whale. It was likely the fun would soon begin. The Old Man cut our line, and Fletcher did the same. Mr. Fletcher was directed to salvage the crew of the "stove" boat, and return to the Avola with them. Mr. Stoddard stood by us to see what Sacred Ben's next move would be. We lay at ease with peaked oars, and kept our eyes on that cask. It floated high on the water, and danced lightly from wave to wave. The becket with the line attached was at the highest point on the very top. In a moment the great cask turned over with a jerk that made the foam fly, and passed out of sight in the depths like the cork on a fish line when a bull head gets a hold. The Old Man's features twisted into a grim smile, and he said:

"Even Sacred Ben won't take that down far with twenty fathoms of line out, and the density of the water increasing with every foot!"

That put plainly before me what a tremendous drag it was, and I realized the superhuman powers possessed by the great sea mammal. Then it burst upon me that we had the Whale of the Cross, sixty tons in weight if a pound, hooked much as a boy catches a

perch. If the hook in the perch's mouth, or the iron in Ben's blubber, did not draw out, we had him sure in the end.

It was not long reckoned by real time, instead of heartbeats, before the buoy came shooting to the surface with such velocity it showed a foot of sky between it and the sea. The next instant the water broke again, and this time the grim, menacing front of Sacred Ben came in view. He emerged a hundred feet from the cask, and in such a position that it was plainly visible. He made for it as savagely as a terrier goes for a rat. His nose struck, and pushed it before him. He opened his huge jaws, and engulfed it. It was fairly in his mouth, and he tried to crush it. Enormous as was the power of those jaws, he did not succeed. It was a tough and awkward mouthful, too large for him to get a good grip on, and of such slippery resistance in the smooth, rounded oak staves that his utmost efforts were foiled.

Sacred Ben realized that his attempts to destroy this mysterious disturber of his peace were futile, and he seemed to reflect a moment—we breathlessly looking on at a safe distance—before he devised a new scheme. Then he fell back, and milled around until he

felt the cask with his flukes. He raised this thirty-ton hammer high in air and brought it down upon the intruder on his domain. The cask was undaunted. It was driven ten feet beneath the water, but it bounced back cheerfully with uninjured staves, and as impudently buoyant as before. The Whale of the Cross carefully measured his distance, and let drive again. The impact caught the buoy nearer one end this time, and instead of going under water it turned two or three summersaults with a tremendous splashing. And then it floated as indomitable as ever. Sacred Ben was puzzled, but not at the end of his tether. He tried a new device. If he could not get this queer animal that defied him one way, he would another. It was something like the old trick Hercules used when he found Atlas gained renewed strength with each contact with the earth. Now Ben manœuvred with the utmost accuracy until he got those flukes fairly under the enemy. They swished upwards as if driven by a mighty engine, and the cask was flung fifty feet aloft like a huge stone from a catapult, but to the bewilderment of the Whale of the Cross it came down without a fracture, and to add insult to injury, landed on the back

of his neck. This inexplicable result was too much for Sacred Ben. He gave it up, and sounded again.

We watched these proceedings with the utmost delight. Uncle Zene actually danced up and down in the stern sheets, and hugged himself in his satisfaction:

"We've got him, darn his skin!" he exclaimed. Then he added: "Ain't it great! I never saw the like of it in my born days!"

Before long that cask disappeared beneath the wave again, but I thought there was a shade less vim in the jerk that took it down. The captain's vigilant eye noted this as well, and he remarked over my head to Morrison, with a return to his official manner:

"The exercise is telling on him, sir. He's too big to work as hard as he has for the last twenty minutes without getting tuckered. Like enough you'll get a chance to put that lance into him again the next time he comes up."

Mr. Stoddard had moved up near us, and the captain directed him to spread out farther, so if the boats got another opportunity they could come on him from opposite sides. He pulled past where he thought the bedevilled whale would rise, and lay watching. Ben did not

remain under so long this time, which in itself was a sign of approaching exhaustion. In less than five minutes the cask appeared, followed after a short interval by the whale. He was still unconquered, and made directly for the buoy. He tried again to bite it, and managed some way to get the line in his mouth. I was greatly concerned for a moment, having the idea he might contrive to bite it off, but Tom and the captain did not appear worried, and I perceived directly his teeth were so wide apart it had settled between two of them on the lower jaw. If so small a thing could have embarrassed the entangled monster, this would have done so, but he seemed entirely unaware of it. But it made his attempts to bite the cask less successful than ever, for the line kept getting in the way, and veered it off. When he convinced himself that this attack was of no use, he returned to his flukes again, and belabored the buoy until it really seemed as if he would dash it to pieces, but the staunch oak staves held good. Of course, if the cask had not been in the yielding water the first stroke would have knocked it to flinders.

Toward the last his blows were obviously given with loss of strength and spirit. Then

he ceased, and for the first time since our iron had entered his back, he lay without motion:

"Pull all!" said the Old Man softly. "Stand up, Tom!"

With a turn of the blade of his steering oar he pointed the boat's nose at Sacred Ben's broadside, and our oars caught the water. Mr. Stoddard was coming too on the other side of the great body. We were fifty feet distant, and Tom had his lance aloft, when the whale's huge head sank as if drawn down, and his body reared itself on end in a perpendicular dive. It was a tremendous distance to hurl a lance, but the fourth mate did not intend to miss the opportunity. He "pitch-poled" his keen weapon with a bitter impetus that carried it over the intervening space, and lodged it in Ben's belly as he disappeared. The warp was jerked from Morrison's hand and went out of sight with the whale. As we backed water, Morrison stooped, and took another lance from its rack at the bottom of the boat, but the captain said:

"I don't believe you'll need it! You went home that time. It was a good dart, sir!"

The fourth mate looked happy, and we waited. Not for long! The trusty old cask

could scarcely have gone five fathoms deep when up it came, and right after it Sacred Ben spouting blood by the bucketful, and sick unto death. Uncle Zene took one glimpse at him, and observed hastily:

"I reckon we'd better get out of this. He's going in his flurry. Pull for all you're worth!"

We had hardly reached what I considered a reasonable distance when the last tremendous climax of the day took place. I had thought that whale's strength exhausted! An earthquake could not have been more vigorous than he was for the next two minutes. He lashed the waters in mad fury with his flukes; he churned them into suds with his fins; he actually bit them, gnashing his jaws so we could hear them click together. He flung his colossal carcase from side to side until he beat the summer sea into tempestuous fury. Then all at once—and it seemed a miracle to me—he rolled over dead as Julius Cæsar.

Hurrah! We had done it! We had killed Sacred Ben, the Whale of the Cross, and avenged old John! We all cheered. Stoddard's boat crew, and Fletcher's, which was returning—too late for the fray, but not for the rejoicing—joined with us, and a wild yell of

victory rent the air that reached over the calm water as far as the bark, and we could hear their hurrahs faintly in response. We pulled to where the cyclopean monster—only lately the scourge of the seas—was rolling inertly to the heave of the water, and the Old Man reached out, and patted his black side:

"Tom," he said deliberately, "I put up the job, but you killed him. I call you a *whaleman,* and if you want to sail with me as mate next voyage I'll sign you on, sure's you're alive!"

Old Tom did not know which way to look at this public tribute from a man who was not given to this sort of thing, so he made his warp fast to Sacred Ben. The others tailed on, and we started for the Avola, which was coming down to us with to'gallant sails set. It was not long before we passed a chain about those flukes that had been so formidable, and put up the tackles to strip the blubber off him. One hundred and thirty-one barrels he stowed down, and was the largest whale killed in the South Pacific that season.

Two of the foremast hands, they said they were cousins of Portugee John, were detailed to prepare our dead comrades for burial. This undertaking business has always seemed un-

pleasant, but apparently these men did not mind it. They washed the corpses, and shaved them. They attired the dead men in the best raiment found in their donkeys. Portuguese sailors are a provident lot, and invariably take with them on their voyages a suit especially designed for such emergencies. Poor chaps, it shows their sense of the uncertain nature of their occupation. When the bodies were as neatly togged out as was possible in the nature of things, they were sewn up in canvas the Old Man donated from the sail room, and some old iron castings, kept in the hold for this melancholy purpose, were attached to their feet. Meanwhile the work of cutting in Sacred Ben went on, and it would never have been suspected that two members of the little community that had lived in such close companionship the past year, lay outstretched in death a few feet distant from the busy laborers. The grim fact of Death is accepted and forgotten on board ship more readily than on the land. Perhaps the absence of womanhood and family relations have something to do with this, as well as the reckless and happy-go-lucky disposition of the average sailorman. At any rate, it appeared to me that the two men alive not ten hours since

had passed away without even a disturbing ripple to remind us of their tragic ends.

When the glorious, tropical, full moon arose, the Old Man came to the waist and ordered "all hands to stand by for burial." He stationed himself by the rail, and the officers ranged themselves opposite. The two chief mourners brought Portugee John on a scuttle-door that had been taken from its place, and rested it, feet foremost, on the rail. We of the crew gathered by the main hatch, and the captain read the impressive words of the burial service at sea by the mellow moonlight:

"We therefore commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body (when the sea shall give up her dead), and the life of the world to come, through out Lord Jesus Christ, who at His coming shall change our vile body, that it may be like His glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

He lowered the book, and made a slight gesture to the pall bearers. They tilted the inboard end of the plank, and John disappeared into the calm bosom of the sea. There were a few bubbles, and it was ended. The ceremony

was repeated for the Flores man, and the captain whisked about briskly, and said in his usual work-a-day tone:

"Turn to!"

As I went back to the try works with Tom Morrison, the fourth mate observed thoughtfully:

"After all, we fellows ain't much more account than a cockroach. We get scrunched like we scrunch them, and that is the end of it. Sometimes you think you are some punkins, but when it comes down to facts the cockroach is just about as important as we are. Well, I don't reckon he puts in much time worrying about *when* he's going to be scrunched, and we might as well do likewise. What do you think about it, Ned?"

"The cockroach is a wise old bird," said I, and we went to work and stopped attempting to dive into mysteries that had puzzled wiser men.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

FOR several weeks after our capture of the Whale of the Cross we had one of our easy spells. No whales, and nothing else exciting except the rats and cockroaches, which absolutely swarmed on the old, oil-soaked Avola. The rats were everywhere; they played around our feet at meal times, and picked up crumbs thrown them like pet poodles. It was nothing unusual for them to run over a leg or arm while one was lying in his bunk, and they even came on deck at night, and foraged for scraps. They were great, hearty, gray fellows, as large as a good-sized kitten, and although they looked very ferocious with their sharp, white teeth, and little, twinkling eyes, we got so we did not mind their companionship, and were on rather friendly terms with them. Nevertheless, they were undesirable shipmates, for in their rapaciousness they ate up a great many useful things.

The after-gang, that is the officers, were not as easy-going as we—perhaps they had more

"'IT 'S A FLOATER, I THINK,' HE REPLIED, 'BUT IT 'S A LONG WAY OFF.'"

See Chapter XV.

property imperilled—and there was open and constant feud between them and the rodents. They devised all sorts of plans and ingenious traps for their extermination, but apparently without the slightest effect in reducing their numbers. Fletcher, the negro third mate, developed a singular faculty in connection with the animals which made the others regard him with envy and admiration. He was possessed of abnormal quickness of hand and eye, and became so expert he could reach down like lightning, pick up any incautious rat by the long tail, and slat it fiercely to the deck again. He killed dozens in this way, until they must have become aware of his peculiar gift, for they looked on him with suspicion, and no longer ventured in his immediate vicinity.

The cockroaches annoyed me more than the rats, although in a way they were not so formidable. They thrived on the diet the ship furnished, and grew to enormous size. It was not unusual to see them nearly an inch long, and they infested every conceivable crack, cranny, and crevice on the Avola. I likened these fastnesses to robbers' caves. Here the marauders dwelt in security like the old barons on the Rhine. When they needed supplies, or

desired to put the outlaying communities under tribute they would make savage forays, sometimes in small parties, and at others in full force. On these latter occasions the forecastle would be literally alive with them. You could not step without crushing half a dozen, with a horrid, repulsive scrunch. And a mashed dead cockroach is even more objectionable than a live one. Its body becomes a greasy, mealy mass, with a penetrating, acrid odor that makes one gasp and flee for fresh air. Several times a day, at irregular intervals, but apparently following some general command, they swarmed out on us *en masse*. If we happened to be eating they would fill our pots and pans, and at such times they invariably crawled over the small, open-wicked lamp and extinguished it, although the odor of roasting cockroach showed they had not accomplished the result without cost to themselves. Another unpleasant habit of these pests was that they would, whenever they caught one of us asleep, eat the flesh under our finger and toe nails. I suppose the thinness of the skin there gave them their opportunity. At any rate, for weeks at this period, I never dared turn in my bunk to sleep without putting on gloves and socks, a habili-

ment that in view of the prevailing tropical heat, was inexpressibly absurd.

I have described these two features of life on a whaler because of the "smoking ship" festival we celebrated at this time. Early one morning, the Old Man came to the waist as the watch was going below, and sung out:

"All hands stands by to smoke ship! Prepare yourselves to remain on deck three days."

We knew what to expect, and at once brought from below such things as we would need during the picnic on deck. Each sailor selected some spot to be his for the nonce, forward of the windlass, or on the try works, or on top of the house, and deposited his mattress. Then the real business began. The main hatches were removed, and a gang of men swarmed down into the lower hold and cleared away a space for the great iron deck pot that generally held Slush's supply of firewood. Kindling, plentifully sprinkled with kerosene and tar was put in the bottom, and on it sulphur and similar articles for the purpose of converting the air below decks into noxious gas that would asphyxiate the pests. The pyre was not lighted at this stage of the proceedings. The gang adjourned to deck, where the captain and

mate had prepared a number of strips of paper, and tins of molasses. By the aid of these, using the blackstrap as mucilage, every tiny crack that allowed air to penetrate below was carefully closed.

"Jump down, Ned," said the skipper, "and light that fire. We'll haul you up before it lays you out."

I took the matches he handed me and put my foot on the point of the tackle hook, holding by the standing part. Down I went, and dropped a blazing match into the charged deck pot. It flickered and burst into a flame, and as I was hoisted again, a trail of stinking smoke enveloped and nearly strangled me before I reached the open air. The hatches were promptly secured, and the crevice overlaid with molasses paper.

A quarter hour later Jonas called me to the forecastle scuttle and told me to lay my ear against it as he was doing. When I did so I could hear a wild commotion. The rats seemed, from the noise, to be scurrying madly around, and from the soft flip-flip on the inner surface of the door, I knew the cockroaches were swarming in incalculable numbers.

The life on deck for the ensuing days was

no hardship either to me or the officers. Then the scuttles and hatches were flung wide to the air, but for an interval no one was permitted below. When the Old Man judged the poisonous fumes had passed away, we made a rush for the interior of the ship expecting to find the deck everywhere covered with the dead bodies of our enemies. Such was not the case. An occasional one lay in the open, but it was apparent most of the rats had retired to the secret places and died there, gnashing their teeth at Fate, like the ferocious hearted outlaws they were. But the deadly vapor had done its work. In twenty-four hours the rotting carcases began to make themselves manifest by the smell, and those of us who had again taken up their quarters below hurriedly brought their bedding once more on deck. It was a week, or longer, before life was endurable between decks, and it seemed to me that a reminiscent stench hung about the forecastle the whole balance of the voyage. Perhaps I was mistaken, and got the smell of the dead rats confused with that of the living Portuguese.

And now an event happened which made a great and pleasant change in my life on board the Avola. The death of Portugee John had

left us short a boatsteerer. In case of emergency, of course, the Old Man could lower himself, and using the fourth mate to steer him, leave Fayal Joe for Stoddard, as had been done when we lowered the second time for Sacred Ben. The boatsteerer is an important man on the ship as well as in the boat, being actually the petty officer of the watch, and the actual working leader in all ship duties. I suppose he corresponds to the warrant officer on a man-of-war. It is the custom in similar cases to choose a fitting substitute from among the crew, and promote him. The advancement takes the chosen one out of the forecastle, for boatsteerers berth and eat in what is called the steerage—a compartment aft of the cabin—with the cook and steward. In some respects this companionship is not undesirable for these two autocrats virtually control the food supply, and have it in their power to share whatever dainties are served at the officers' table.

One memorable afternoon, in the dog watch, the word was passed forward that Long Island Ned was wanted on the quarter deck. I hurried aft without the least idea of what was about to happen, and found Captain Bourne and Mr. Stoddard awaiting me;

"Ned," the Old Man began, "Mr. Stoddard thinks you could steer his boat. What's your idea about it?"

He grinned, and both looked pleasant enough, but I was taken flat aback by the unexpectedness of it. Of course I knew it was a compliment, and a very unusual occurrence for a green hand to be thus advanced; and I fully understood how much more comfortable and happy it would make me. In fact, the only quarrel I had with my life on board was the necessarily intimate association with the riff-raff of the forecastle. I turned red as a boiled lobster, and stammered away in my embarrassment until I was afraid they would think I was trying to decline the berth, but the Old Man cut me short in a moment by saying in his usual decisive way:

"Get your dunnage and strike aft to the steerage. Take John's bunk."

"Aye, aye, sir," I meekly answered, but I went forward with a light heart.

I stood masthead lookout at the main now instead of forward, and either Mr. Stoddard or Mr. Morrison shared the duty. This was very pleasant, for they were intelligent companions, very different from the ignorant fore-

mast hands with whom I had been obliged to herd. While these officers had been friendly enough to me while I was in the forecastle, the difference in our status had made it impossible for us to become intimate.

The next day after my promotion I was aloft with Stoddard in the morning watch. He had a pair of excellent glasses with which he could sweep the face of the water further than I could see with my unaided vision, though that happened to be keen. On this occasion I saw he was regarding something with interest that was invisible to me. I grew curious as he continued to gaze, and asked him what he was looking at.

"It's a floater, I think," he replied, "but it's a long way off, and I can't quite make it out. Whatever it is, it's black and floating high in the water, and there are a lot of birds about it. You take a look through my glasses."

He handed them to me. When I had the focus right, I could see the object clearly. As he said it floated high above the surface, but I discerned an occasional disturbance in the water thirty or forty feet from the black mass that had first attracted attention. Myriads of gulls hovered around and over the object as if

feeding. The second mate thought the ripple I noted was the disturbance made by the dead whale's flukes. He hailed the deck and told the Old Man, who was prowling the length of the weather quarter as usual, that he had raised a dead whale about four miles to leeward.

The news interested Uncle Zene out of all proportion to its importance, it seemed to us.

"Hard up your helm!" he shouted to the man at the wheel. Then as the Avola began to pay off, he called up to Stoddard: "Give us the course, sir! Point the flying jib boom straight on that dead whale, sir!"

Mr. Stoddard smiled and sung out, "Steady as she goes!" when we were headed right. Then he added to me:

"I wonder whether Uncle Zene is calculating on cutting in that fellow. By the way it floats, it's been dead long enough to be blasted, and I'll bet it stinks worse than a bushel of pole cats."

We were in a fair way to find out. For a wonder there was a humming breeze, which shortly brought us to the immediate vicinity of the floater. The second mate was right. As we came closer a vile stench, that became more appalling as we approached, assailed our nos-

trils. It did not daunt Uncle Zene. He ordered away the starboard boat. When it was in the water, he took a short-handled whaling spade from its place in the companion-way locker, and climbed into the stern sheets. Stoddard had ceased smiling by this time, and was looking curious.

"I wonder what the Old Harry he's after!" he muttered to me. "What's he going to do with that spade?"

I could not answer to my own satisfaction, but I watched with increasing wonder as I reflected that acute-witted old Uncle Zene was the most unlikely man in the whaling fleet to put himself to this discomfort without some well-defined object at the end. When the boat neared the dead whale he pulled half a dozen bandanna handkerchiefs from the front of his shirt, and tieing one around his own nostrils, so as to not interfere with his vision, he tossed the others to his crew. We could see they followed his example, and then backed him right up against the floater's distended stomach. The Old Man held his nose with the fingers of one hand in addition to the defense afforded by the wipe, while he dug into the mass of putrid flesh with the spade held in the other. In a

moment we heard him give a shout of exultation.

He dropped his spade, reached over and lifted out a large chunk of something from among the intestines of the whale, and sank back with it in his lap. Apparently he was almost overcome by the noxious gases, but he signed the men to pull for the ship. In a moment he straightened up, said something to Tom Morrison who was pulling the harpooneer oar, and pointed triumphantly to the grayish black mass he had taken from the whale's insides. At this point, the second mate, who had his eyes glued on the scene, clapped his thigh with his great hand, reckless of his position at the slings of the main-royal yard a hundred feet above deck, and said to me indignantly:

"I see what it is, you cussed fool! The Old Man has got a lump of ambergris out of that dead sperm whale, and *it's worth twenty dollars an ounce if it's worth a cent!*"

The Old Man came over the side chipper as a boy, and a moment after hailed us cheerily:

"Lay down here, if you want to see the sight of your lives!"

We were on deck in a jiffy, conscious of a rare and delightful perfume fighting the noisome stench that continued to eat into the wind from the whale. Tom had carefully passed the lump of ambergris to the captain, and it lay before us on the quarter deck as large as a bushel basket.

"There," said the Old Man. "Look at it! A hundred pounds, if it's an ounce. Ten thousand dollars at the lowest reckoning!"

THE WOMAN, YOUNG AND HANDSOME, SEEMED UNCONSCIOUS OF HER BURDEN.

See Chapter XVI.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THESE New Ireland natives made me rate my swimming abilities very low. We were constantly cruising along the coast of one of this group of islands at that period, and generally within a distance of three or four miles from the beach. It was no uncommon thing for some of the natives, women as well as men, to swim out to where we lay almost motionless in the light winds that prevailed. They had no purpose in the visit, as they could not carry any thing to barter, but seemed on a pleasure trip, or in mere curiosity to view us at closer range.

Once a woman appeared who varied the monotony of the performance by bringing her baby, which could not have been, at the outside, six months old. The tiny, brown, laughing imp sat perched astride her parent's neck, and in moments of uncertainty clung to her hair. The woman, who was young and handsome, seemed unconscious of her burden, and

apparently her action was as natural as it would be for a civilized nurse to carry the infant on her shoulder. When she swam along side I was in the waist preparing to light a new clay pipe. She caught a glimpse of it as I leaned over the rail. I saw by the expression of her face how she coveted it, and held it aloft in one hand, and pointed to the baby with the other. She understood like a flash that I meant would she exchange the one for the other. Alas for the sacredness of Mother Love! She snatched the infant from her neck, and eagerly held it forth, the while she supported herself half out of water in some marvellous manner by the dextrous use of her legs and feet. I laughed, and tossed her the pipe, signing she could keep both. She caught the precious article expertly as a ball tosser, her features radiantly expressing passionate exultation. She was acquainted with its use, for her first action was to blow through it to see if it were clear. When this important point was settled, she passed the stem through a hole in the lobe of her ear corresponding to those Christian ladies use for earrings, but much larger. When satisfied of its absolute

security, she started for the shore with a thrilling whoop of joy.

We had now been in these southern waters more than a year and a half, and the bottom of the old Avola had become so foul with barnacles and sea weed growth that she was almost at the mercy of the winds and currents so far as her sailing was concerned. The matter had been discussed among the officers as being of importance, but the Old Man, who kept his own counsel and never spoke till he was ready to act, had not announced his intentions.

I was not surprised, however, when he ordered the topgallant sails set at the fore and the main, and the course changed to the northward. A little later Tom told me we were bound to a small harbor on the Duke of York island, one of the group, to get the bottom scraped by the natives. Incidentally we would replenish our water supply, and lay in a stock of fresh provisions.

This harbor turned out to be one of the most beautiful places I had ever seen. It was completely land-locked, being approached by a winding passage, with the soundings of

which the skipper appeared to be familiar, for he conned the bark into her anchorage without hesitation. There was good holding ground, and the cove was not half a mile from shore to shore. Abrupt cliffs a hundred feet high, crowned by trees that went another hundred toward the heavens, surrounded it. It called to mind a pool in a forest, for, except at mid-day, the calm water was swathed in shadow.

As the bark came around the last corner into the cove we heard a tumult of cries and calls from the summit of the cliffs, and before our anchor was down fifteen or twenty natives descended by a trail to starboard of our berth where a ravine pierced the mountain. They dragged canoes from the underbrush at the base of the wall, and in a moment were alongside.

Captain Bourne met the first, who appeared to be in authority, at the rail, and welcomed him cordially. As near as I could make the name out, he called him Luckawarre. It turned out Luckawarre was a chief of eminence, and mighty potentate, and he certainly was a magnificent savage. He stood six feet, six inches in height, and was a better built man than John L. Sullivan in the palmiest days

of that eminent pugilist. His features were Grecian in type, and cleanly modelled as those of a college professor. His hair was long and wavy, and hung in natural ringlets on his shoulders. Altogether this Kanaka chieftain —I presume he was Kanaka—was a perfect specimen of natural Manhood.

Luckawarre had a few words of English, and quickly made himself at home with all of us, although there was a primitive dignity about him that forbade our taking liberties. One of his first actions was to bring from his canoe a contrivance which seemed to be an empty cocoanut shell with a couple of short sticks protruding from holes in it. It rudely resembled a bird. He carried this contraption forward while the other natives looked on the ceremony with respectful awe, and tied it on the end of the bowsprit. When he returned to the captain he pointed to the symbol, and then to his companions, and said emphatically: "Taboo!" The Old Man nodded as though well pleased, and escorted Luckawarre to his after cabin. I may add that the whole ten days we lay here, not so much as a rope of yarn was pilfered from the ship. Yet I firmly believe those natives would have stolen a red hot stove

if their natural instincts had not been restrained.

Luckawarre was something of a business man in contradistinction to other natives in the South Seas, and after his understanding with the Old Man, he went right to work. His canoes were sent to the shore: the natives ascended the cliff, and after a while returned with a lot of old cocoanuts. That is, they were dead ripe, and the husk on them was dried and toughened. It appeared these entered into the skipper's plans, for as soon as they arrived the men were set at husking them with hatchet and marline spike. When a number of sections of husk were ready, Luckawarre selected five of his most robust subjects, and the scheme for cleaning the Avola's foul bottom became apparent.

Each of the natives took a section of the tough husk, sprang overboard, and disappeared under the ship. Luckawarre himself dived from the dolphin striker, and swam leisurely along the keel. In a few moments, I am afraid to say how many for fear of disbelief, he appeared at the stern, looking as calm and unwinded as when he entered the water. He swam to the waist, seized a rope, and came

up the side like a monkey, in spite of his bulk and weight. He had inspected the whole bottom in that trip, and made a definite report of its condition to the captain. Thereafter he confined his efforts to superintending the job. His methods were all right. He made the workers clean up as they advanced along the keel, and if on inspection, he found the work unsatisfactory, he stormed around like an Irish boss to his section hands. It took several days before the work was concluded, and I had the curiosity to swim under the bark myself to see what they had accomplished. I found they had actually scoured the copper bright, and it was probable she never had been so clean since she left the ways. I took an opportunity to tell this to the captain, and he smiled quietly, and said:

"Yes, Ned. I knew it would be all O. K. This man Luckawarre did the same thing for me when I was here five years ago in the Naponsett. That nigger's a Man!"

We had to go a long way out through the passage to get our fresh water, and when the stream was reached, to ascend it some distance to a deep pool. One day when the ashore gang were up there filling the casks, one of the Por-

tuguese sailors, named Silva, and I were acting as boat keepers. We had the four boats tied together, and anchored, he in one, and I in another. I had been sitting thoughtfully when I was suddenly awakened to things about me by a heavy splash. When I looked around Silva had disappeared. We were in ten or twelve fathoms of water, and I remembered that this man could not swim a stroke. I was lightly clad in undershirt and drawers, and the water was clear as crystal in the intense sunshine. I caught sight of him in an instant, and as he was some distance away with another boat intervening, I leaped overboard and swam to him instead of trying to rescue him with a boat hook. It turned out one of the most foolish things I ever did in my life. I took him by the scuff of the neck as he bobbed above the water, saying:

"Lay over on your back, Silva. I'll get you out all right."

The fellow was mad with terror, and instead of following my directions, he twisted about, and had both arms around my neck before I realized what he was at. He had me so I could not strike him, or get a hold that would

do the slightest good, and it came over me like a flash that this fool would probably succeed in drowning both of us. There we were, two cable's lengths from shore, and not a soul in sight. As I thought, and it is marvellous how much one can think at such moments, Silva hugged tighter than ever, and he was strong as a bear. I had struggled fiercely as he at the outset, and then I had an idea. I lay quiescent in his grasp, and filled my lungs with a huge inhalation as we sunk in the clear water.

Down we went! thirty feet—forty—fifty! Still the crazy Portuguese hung on to me like grim death. Now the water was growing darker overhead, and my ears began to ache. But owing to that full breath of air with which I had packed my lungs at the last moment, I was not so greatly distressed. Still we sunk, and now Silva's grip, which had grown tighter the first part of our downward journey, began to relax. Pent up as it was, my heart bounded exultantly, and in another instant I cast his arms from about me with an effort that took most of my remaining strength. Hurrah, I had outlasted him, and was free! I side-stepped—at least that term describes the nature

of the motion I made—to get out of his immediate vicinity, and shot to the surface like a cork.

The first thing I did when I reached the top of the water again was to climb into the nearest whale boat. Ten seconds later Silva reappeared. I had the boat hook by this time, and twisted the prong into the neckband of his shirt without caring much whether I gashed the flesh or not. He was half dead with exhaustion and terror, and had swallowed a lot of water into the bargain. If he had gone down the third time it would have been the end. When I had him fairly on the boat hook, I held him up a bit so he could regain his breath, and reasoned with him. I am forced to confess my didactic discourse did not seem to impress him much, and I finally hauled him in over the stern so he would not upset the boat. He lay down in the bottom, and shivered, and wept, and called on all the saints in the calendar, and possibly he would have been doing it yet if I had not shook him up roughly, and told him I'd give him a hammering that would make him wish he was drowned again if he didn't quit his nonsense.

A month after, when he knew I was short

he brought me a pound of prime ship's tobacco and would not take any pay. So you see there is gratitude even in a Portuguese shellback.

Before we went to sea, the Old Man paid a visit to Luckawarre at the native village. It was about two miles distant from the cove. I was lucky enough to go along at the invitation of the chieftain with whom I had become very good friends. We followed a narrow but well travelled trail through the forest, and came to a valley scooped out of the upland, where in a natural wooded park was the village of a score or two huts. The central dwelling was Luckawarre's residence. It was more commodious than the others, and to our wonder, roofed with corrugated iron. The chief was elated over our surprise and admiration, and managed to make us comprehend he had secured the roofing from a Dutch trader who had wandered into the cove, and been attacked by some unruly subjects during his absence. Fortunately he had returned in time to put a stop to the fight. In exchange for this and other services the grateful German had presented him with the iron, which he happened to have on board.

The huts were made of flimsy material, the

walls being only of wattled or woven rattan attached to the upright posts which supported the roofs. The other dwellings were thatched skilfully and efficiently with grass, and as they had only to protect themselves against a straight downpour, they were safe enough from the rain, which seemed the element they feared. The air circulated as freely through the houses as it did outside.

That day I had my first feed of pig and breadfruit baked together in a Kanaka oven, and it was unexpectedly good. The preparation of the dish is as follows: The native simply digs a pit, preserving the top sod intact. Then a number of large cobblestones are heated and dropped red hot in the hole. A quantity of well-wetted leaves are thrown on top the stones. The pig is stuffed with breadfruit after his entrails are removed, enveloped in moistened leaves, and put on top. Then the turf is carefully fitted on, and it is left until ready to eat. When taken from the pit, the steaming flesh is deliciously cooked, and the skin and bristles come off at a touch. The breadfruit is an addition to the dish, although it is not really much like bread. It resembles more a boiled suet pudding.

We ate on small wooden trenchers which the women placed at intervals on the tiny lawn in front of Luckawarre's door. Bananas and oranges were laid beside the trenchers much in the same way a piece of bread is put on the napkin at a civilised dinner table. Beside the pig and breadfruit, which appeared to be the *piece de resistance,* we had some other viands which were unfamiliar to me. One was called *poee-poee,* and is, I have heard, their real substitute for bread. It is prepared with the breadfruit as a base, but is fermented before considered fit to use. In this condition it will keep, even in the tropical climate, a considerable length of time. We had one course of raw fish, so fresh they were nearly alive. They were consumed—by those who indulged—with a sauce of sea water. A cup of cocoa shell, full of salt water, was placed on each trencher, and the natives alternately dipped and ate.

Altogether it was a bit of out-of-the-way experience, and I returned to the Avola thinking myself fortunate to have had it.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

WHEN we bade goodbye to Luckawarre and left the Duke of York Island, our course lay to the northward. It was Captain Bourne's intention to cruise in leisurely fashion, for one is apt to raise whales anywhere in these seas, between the north shore of New Guinea and the southern skirts of the Solomon group. At that time the great island of New Guinea was almost unexplored, and its inhabitants had a reputation for inveterate savagery that prevented any but the foolhardy from closely approaching its shores. In addition the natives were reputed to be cannibals.

I cannot refrain from giving the hardy American whaleman most of the credit for opening these lesser known islands of the South Pacific and introducing their inhabitants to the doubtful benefits of a higher civilization. As long ago as the "forties," when whaling was one of the important industries of the world, and the American fleet of hundreds of

vessels from Nantucket, New Bedford, Provincetown and Sag Harbor covered the seas of every portion of the globe, these hardy and intrepid men followed the sperm whale into its favorite fastnesses among the South Sea islands. If the masters needed fruit and vegetables or fresh water, they did not hesitate with nervous tremors over dangerous possibilities; they anchored in the nearest convenient harbor, and wheedled, or I am sorry to record, bullied the savages into giving them the needed supplies. In this way mainly the islanders became acquainted with the great Winged Canoe and the White Man. The contact resulted in the deterioration of the weaker brown race. The rough sailors introduced contagious diseases among their darker-skinned brothers that mournfully weakened their less resistant stamina, and brought moral standards that corrupted their innocent minds. But the missionary followed, and when he came he found the worst evils he was called to combat were those inoculated by the Caucasians who had preceded him.

We only sighted the New Guinea coast several times, but one day it chanced we were

becalmed in plain sight of the shore. Mr. Fletcher was at the masthead, and after a time he hailed:

"Below there! Captain Bourne?"

The next moment Uncle Zene stood on the main hatch, craning his neck to gaze aloft:

"Aye, aye, sir. What is it?" he asked.

"There is a nigger out here between us and the shore. Seems to be swimming for the ship. But he's holding one hand in the air, and there's a bunch of something in it that glitters yellow like gold."

"How far off is he?"

"Nearly a mile," returned the third mate.

"We'll wait for him," concluded the Old Man, with a smile.

As we were drifting without steerage way, the captain's decision was a wise one. When the swimmer approached near enough for Mr. Fletcher to get a more accurate view of the object of his curiosity, he called down with some disappointment in his voice:

"I believe that's a bird he's got in his hand! I can see two long feathers running back from its yellow body."

"Aye, aye," returned the Old Man, calmly. "No doubt he's swum off with the dried skin

of a bird of paradise. I'll give him a plug of tobacco for it."

A few minutes later the darky came alongside. He was a different type from any I had previously seen. He appeared to have some infusion of negro blood, for his skin was nearly black, and the lineaments of his face coarse and fleshy. His hair was the most noticeable thing about him. It was wonderfully luxuriant, and kinked into tight little coils that covered his head to such a thickness I doubt if you could have fitted an empty bushel basket over it.

This queer specimen had swum the whole distance from the shore with one hand. In the other fist he held aloft what the captain assured us was the dried skin and feathers of a bird of paradise—unknown save in New Guinea. It certainly was beautiful.

The Old Man found the native was something of a trader himself, and had a notion of the value of his merchandise. He finally gave up two plugs of tobacco with a sigh for what was undoubtedly worth fifty or sixty dollars, and I carefully hoisted it on deck with the scoop net.

We examined the captain's purchase with

great interest, for none of us had ever seen anything like it before. The body of the bird when alive could not have been larger than that of a robin or jay. The head and neck were covered with short, thickset feathers, resembling velvet pile, with the bright golden color above, and a brilliant emerald green beneath. From under the shoulders on each side a dense tuft of golden orange plumes sprung. These were two feet in length, and the captain told me he had heard they can be erected at will by the live bird, so as to enclose the greater part of the body. The two central tail feathers were nearly three feet long. Mr. Stoddard voiced the opinion of the rest of us when he remarked:

"That fellow has got the peacock beaten to death."

We saw more of the Solomon islanders than we did of the New Guinea natives. They were not at all backward at making our acquaintance whenever they had the opportunity. One time, when the Avola was drifting between two islands of the group, a whole flotilla surrounded us. The Captain was cautious in his dealings with these fellows, and it was evident he thoroughly distrusted them. All the mus-

kets were charged, and men on whose courage he could depend stationed at every place where they might slip aboard.

These islanders had rudely built boats as well as canoes, and some of them were equipped, like ancient galleys, with two banks of oars on their double decks. The largest had a sort of dais amidships on which sat a very corpulent man who was evidently supreme chieftain. I perceived when they came closer that he suffered from some disease which had swollen each of his legs to the size of his body. A large percentage of the visitors were afflicted in the same way. The Old Man said the disease was a form of elephantiasis, and was common in this particular group. He added that the Solomon islanders were murderous brutes, and inveterate eaters of human flesh. He had known cases where the wrecked crews of ships had been captured by these cannibals, and eaten.

In spite of the shadiness of their character, it turned out to be lucky for us we met them. Their object turned out to be to sell fifteen or twenty hogs they had brought off in their boats with their feet firmly tied. They were of good size, mostly weighing over two hundred

pounds. The captain bought them gladly, and reasonably. Ten or fifteen inches of old hoop iron did the trick. A sort of pen was hastily constructed forward of the windlass, and the grunters were hoisted over the rail and deposited there. When the bands that confined their legs were cut their powers of locomotion were not greatly improved, for we discovered their hooves had grown so long they turned up at the ends, and they clattered about the deck after the manner of a cat shod in walnut shells. They could not get any foothold. The explanation was that their food had been so abundant and easy to procure they did not have to dig and root after the manner of their less fortunate brethren in temperate climes, and their toe-nails had not worn down as Nature intended.

One of the fattest was killed that day, the cooper officiating as butcher. We revelled in that fresh pork, and every man, forward and aft, had all he wanted to eat. We were none of us disposed to be hypercritical after eighteen months of salt junk, but the truth is, that meat was so strongly impregnated with cocoanut oil, the fruit having been about their sole diet, that no one but sailors—and sailors a

long time out of port at that—could possibly have held it down. By the way, we also laid in a stock of the ripe nuts to feed the pigs as long as they lasted, and splitting those nuts for their meals became one of our principal occupations.

One of the animals was a little fellow, that is, it did not scale more than sixty or seventy pounds. It was black, and sleek, and of a companionable disposition. Jonas adopted her, for she was of the softer sex, and in a short time she became a general favorite, and was allowed the run of the deck. Somebody christened her Jinny. She remained true to Jonas, who was her first love, but would come trotting along at the sound of her name like a pet dog. We acted as chiropodists in her behalf, and trimmed her feet so she got around without trouble. In the night watches she would snuggle up to Jonas, poke her black nose affectionately under his arm, and go off to sleep like a baby.

The Old Man was downright reckless with that fresh pork. Pig after pig was slaughtered by Bungs, and it was dished up day after day, roasted, fried, boiled, hashed until I was downright sick of it, and yearned for an honest bit

of salt horse. At last the time came when there were no more occupants of the pen forward of the windlass. Jinny did not mourn her compatriots, and nuzzled around the deck, and thrust her nuzzle into our horny hands as trustingly as if it never occurred to her that she was destined to eventually go the way they had gone. It made us all sad to contemplate it, and we awaited with trepidation the order to come from the Old Man. I think he sensed the general feeling for little escaped his observation, and once I saw him look on with a quizzical smile when he caught Stoddard rubbing her back and she appreciatively humping herself.

At last one day the edict went forth. We'd had a steady diet of salt food for a couple of weeks, and if it had been any other animal than the beloved Jinny we should have rejoiced.

"Slush," the Captain said tersely, "kill the black pig to-day, and let us have some fresh pork."

As soon as he had given the order he retired to his after-cabin, probably to be out of hearing of comment. We were all too cast down to protest. Tears positively stood in

Stoddard's big gray eyes, and almost brimmed over. Jonas could not control his voice to say what he thought. Undoubtedly, it appeared to him in the light of a cruel and uncalled-for slaughter. I had just observed that the last cocoanut had been fed to Jinny that morning. and on reflection I was forced to agree in the captain's evident opinion that it would not pay to feed a pet pig on ship's stores. I noted after a bit that Jonas had recovered his speech, and was going from man to man of the watch, and giving each an earnest talk. Then he came aft to where Stoddard, and Morrison, and I stood by the main hatch, and said to the second mate:

"The starboard watch wants to speak to the captain, sir."

The officer stared at the old Yankee a moment, and then nodded; but he said:

"It's no use, Jonas. He won't do it!"

Mr. Stoddard went aft, and leaned over the open skylight by the binnacle:

"Captain Bourne," he said with formal respect, "the starboard watch wishes to speak with you."

"The foremast hands?" inquired Uncle Zene's voice from the after-cabin.

"Yes, sir."

"Tell the ring leader if he shows up on my quarter deck I'll knock his fool head off. And have Bungs slaughter that pig at once."

His tone was very crisp, and Stoddard went forward in a hurry. What he said I don't know, but no deputation loomed up aft, and inside of two minutes Jinny was a corpse. The Old Man never mentioned the matter again, but that was his way. She made pretty good pork.

Now ensued a period when we did not see a spout for two months. We were on the Caroline island cruising ground, and generally out of sight of land. Scrimshawning was the favorite occupation during our leisure. The word is a difficult one to give an exact definition, but old whalers understand it to mean the manufacturing of any trifle, trinket, or curio out of materials they have accumulated during the voyage. Embellishing whale's teeth with India ink, pricked in the ivory with infinite patience and exactitude, and mounting them in pairs is one thing they all do, or have a try at. A pair of teeth, carefully mated as a team of carriage horses, is selected. The roughnesses are laboriously taken off with

emery paper, and they are rubbed and oiled until polished like a billiard ball. The tooth is now ready for the picture, and a design is selected with anxious care and pricked in, sometimes in colors. Time is of no account in this labor, and the minuteness of the decoration is supposed to add to its merit. A sailor will sometimes put in the spare time of his whole voyage in thus scrimshawning a nice pair of teeth. And when he goes ashore his boarding master steals them, or he sells them to the blind pig for a half pint of New England rum.

Canes from the jawbone of a whale were also considered desirable as *objets de vertu*. This bone is always saved, and is very dense and close grained, and takes a high polish. It is also elastic, and almost unbreakable. The amount of labor that goes to the making of the elaborate designs in vogue among the old shellbacks is truly formidable, but I have seen them with mimic sea serpents entwined the whole lengths, or with intricate knots patiently wrought on as heads or knobs. Jonas was especially skilful in this handicraft, as it deserves to be called, and had a set of tools for the work. He even did inlaying with admirable results.

He had gotten hold of a slab of ebony at one of the places we had stopped, or from some ship we had gammed, and he made a cane of this inlaid with ivory and sandalwood, that I believe would have brought a hundred dollars from a connoisseur. This shrewd old Yankee was different from the ordinary shellback, and had never lost his birthright of taking intelligent care of number one. He told me he sold everything he made to a man "down east" at the end of his voyage, and had sometimes received from that source as much as his lay amounted to. Blood will tell.

SUDDENLY WE HELD OUR BREATH, AND LISTENED AS IF OUR SOULS DEPENDED ON OUR HEARING.

See Chapter XVIII.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THESE Caroline islands among which we were cruising are not unknown to those who go down to the sea in ships, and have in time played their part in history. For instance, the Confederate privateer Shenandoah started in to demolish the whaling industry of New England during the war of the Rebellion. She cruised through the South Pacific, burning and sinking the blubber hunters where ever she could find them. Among other places she visited in her search was Middle Harbor on Ascension, the main island of the group. Here she unluckily found a dozen whaling vessels, who had heard of her depredations on the fleet, and taken refuge in this secluded place, hoping to escape. They were burned to the water's edge, and the crews compelled to take to the shore. In some cases the whalemen made their home among the natives for years, and others were rescued from time to time by passing vessels.

Apropos of the Shenandoah, the Old Man

related an incident where her captain was outwitted by a Nantucket man known as Captain Nye. I have forgotten the name of his ship, but it was sighted and chased by the privateer. Nye—he was known in the fleet as "Stinker Nye," from his habit of picking up dead whales—at once hoisted a yellow flag, indicating there was smallpox on board, and lay to. The Shenandoah dashed fiercely in until her officers were able to distinguish the ensign flying at the gaff. Then her captain called a consultation of her officers, and they decided it not worth while to investigate too closely into the truth of that marine announcement. Nye rummaged his flag locker, got down his signal book, and began to appeal to the Shenandoah for aid in his extremity. Instead of giving it, the Confederate hauled his wind and showed the stern of the privateer to the whaler. Nye made straight for Nantucket, and it is on record that he reached his home port with a ship full of sperm oil that brought war prices.

Captain Bourne was tired of inaction, and could not understand why he did not see whales. The cruising ground was the best in the world, and he said he knew they were all around us. His statement was confirmed by

our seeing pieces of squid—one of the principal foods of the sperm whale—afloat in the water from time to time. The Old Man prowled up and down like a caged hyena, and sniffed the breeze to windward a hundred times a day. He wound up by putting us all on edge like himself. The whales finally made their appearance, and in an entirely unexpected way —at least to me.

One night we had the middle watch, and Morrison and I were yarning in the star-light at the vice-bench. Unless you have experienced one you can have no idea of these starry nights in the South seas. The whole firmament is aglow with stars, and their twinkling reflections mirror themselves in the calm, slow-heaving wave. The light is soft and far-reaching, while the world is filled with dimness and mystery. The creaking of a yard at its slings as it swung idly, or the ripple of a swell as it gently broke on our hull, were the only sounds that marred the stillness.

Suddenly we held our breath, and listened as if our souls depended on our hearing aright. The noise which had interrupted our conversation sounded like a sigh as it struck our ears again. But what a sigh! It made the night

quiver. After an interval it came again, and this time it seemed to me I detected a wheeze that resembled steam struggling from a valve. By this time Mr. Stoddard had come softly from the quarter deck, and stood at my elbow. His face was alive with excitement, and his lips parted to speak. In such moments he had an amusing habit—which I was familiar with —of verbally abusing the person nearest by. He said to us with deep earnestness:

"You cussed, infernal fools! That's a whale!"

I was about to suggest we call the Old Man, when he came out of the companion way in his pajamas to take, after a fashion of his, a look at the night. Before we could get to him with our story; in fact, before we had time to start, he had caught a sniff of the night air and stiffened like a pointer dog when it scents a covey of quail. The next moment that brobdignagian, sobbing sigh came again, and nearer than before. He cast a quick glance around, as though to assure himself of the general condition of things, and came to us with the swiftness of a bullet. His face was radiant, and he held down his excitement with difficulty:

"Get forward among the watch, Ned! Tell 'em if they make a sound that would wake a humming bird, I'll—I'll—blast 'em, I'll kill 'em! Get the port watch on deck! And pass the word for the boat's crews to stand by to lower after whales. Make 'em understand silence is necessary."

Tom started aft to rout the officers of the port watch out, and Bungs, and the cook, and steward from the steerage, while I went forward. It was a weird experience. All hands swarmed up without a sound. Needful orders were given in whispers. Not the end of a rope was allowed to fall harshly on deck. Even the boat tackles were slushed by the captain's orders to forestall their squeaks.

In the meantime the sound of the spouting whale became perceptible to all, and shortly it was evident there were a number—probably a school—of them, and close at hand; although the facility with which sound travels over calm water made their exact position a matter of uncertainty. But not for long. All in a moment the sea about the Avola was alive with black forms of the mammals. They brushed the ship at times with their bodies, and once I held my breath as the hump of one scraped

along the keel, and made the whole fabric of the vessel tremble. It is probable they thought the hull one of themselves, for they displayed no signs of uneasiness. They almost covered the ocean as far as I could see. Then came a moment when there were none in the immediate vicinity, and the Old Man, who had been awaiting such an opportunity to get the boats in the water, gave the word to lower. Stoddard took my place in the bow as we left the ship, and said:

"We won't use the iron to-night, Ned. I'll do the work with the lance!"

I comprehended that our mission was simply to kill all we could, and not attempt to make fast to any. In my heart I cordially approved this plan, for it seemed to me that being dragged about by a furious whale in the midst of this school was about as promising a form of suicide as could be devised. It did not take us long to get at the work. The crew sat on the gunwales, and handled their paddles without even rippling the water, and we were among them again. One thrust forth a great snout close by the stern, and I found myself gazing square into his eye. I suppose he did not see me, or sense what I was, but in my bewilder-

ment I certainly expected to see his expression change.

A grunt, such as you would expect from a mastodon, attracted my attention, and I saw Stoddard had jabbed his lance into the vitals of one of the monsters. He did the same to another, and a third. To my surprise, beyond an involuntary shudder, which may be described as a wince, and the invariable grunt, they took their death wounds silently, and as if they did not understand what was happening. I imagine the explanation lies in the fact that they have absolutely no nervous system, and little sense of physical pain in their tremendous frames.

At any rate we had been fully five minutes in among them, and the second mate had lanced at least five, more or less effectively, before there was any sign of their waking up to the situation. Of course, the other boats were somewhere, doing the same work, though I did not attempt to keep track of them, having, it seemed to me, plenty to do in handling that steering oar so the boat was not hoisted on the hump of some inadvertent whale. Mr. Stoddard had caught sight of a large cow a little distance away, and we were trying to get her

into a position where he could kill it, when there suddenly came a change. It seemed as if the whole school simultaneously awoke to their danger and as nearly as I could make out, just as Stoddard made his dart three of the wounded animals selected the moment to go into their flurries.

Imagine fifty, or perhaps a hundred whales, averaging forty tons in weight, confined in a limited area, plunging and rolling around like a school of porpoises. That is what these were doing, only theirs was mad terror instead of frolic. I stood at the steering oar expecting annihilation every second, and the men, paddle in hand, stared stupidly at the commotion. Stoddard was the only one that kept his head, or imagined there was a possibility of escaping the peril surrounding us. His voice was hard and tense, and made us leap to obey:

"Avast paddles! Pull all! Ned, lay her head straight for the bark!"

He set the example by dropping into the harpooner thwart, and pulling like Hercules himself. I perceived the bulk of the school were on the side away from the ship, and there was a bare chance we might be able to get through without running into one of them. Of course,

such a collision would be accidental, for the attention of the whales was not directed to us. There was no attempt at caution on our part. It was no longer necessary. Every man pulled as hard as he knew how, and I simply held the boat straight. Several times we shaved their bodies by a hair's breadth, and once I thought we were surely gone. A large cow—I took her to be the one the second mate had last lanced—was lying directly across our path. I was preparing to double her flukes when she sprung into her flurry, and shot with the speed of a locomotive straight at us. The whale boat had good way on, and I gave it a heave with the long steering oar that turned it at right angles to the course we had been pursuing. I nearly ran on another's hump, but my diversion, and the fact that the wounded cow was beginning to swing in the circle that seems to be a law of their death struggle, saved our bacon by the narrowest margin imaginable. The next moment we reach the Avola, and the shipkeepers had the tackles overhauled ready for us to hook on.

The others had also arrived at the conclusion that the bark was preferable as an abiding place to an open boat at this time, and, in fact, they

had come aboard before we had. Captain Bourne's heart appeared to be filled with joy, for this "run in" with a school of whales in the night was the rarest kind of thing in the way of luck, and it looked as if we had taken advantage of it to the utmost without a single casualty. He questioned each of the officers minutely to gain an idea of the probable results of the raid. The first mate claimed he had lanced four, and felt sure of three of them. Fletcher said he had certainly killed two. Tom Morrison was willing to bet on three he had struck giving up the ghost, with a possible fourth. That left us on top of the heap, for Stoddard asserted five out of the six he had a chance at were as good as in the try pot. Uncle Zene counted them up on his fingers:

"Thirteen you're sure of! That's an unlucky number, but I reckon we'll have to take our risks. Between all you ain't sure about, it's apt to foot up more. If it don't, it will be less. I kinder hate to count chickens before they're hatched, but I'm going to this time. All hands lay aft to splice the main brace!"

When Uncle Zene did a thing, he did it royally. He brought out a demijohn from his private stores, and every man on board had a

jolt that made his hair twitch. It was by this time beginning to show glimmers of dawn in the east, and in a few minutes the sun sprang full-dazzling into the sky. The mastheads were already aloft, but the Old Man mounted the rigging to the main top himself with his telescope swung over his shoulder. He intended to look up and count those dead whales himself. No one ventured to forestall him. After a bit he snapped his glass shut, and started for the deck.

"Fifteen dead whales in sight!" he announced. "Lower away all, and string them alongside. Slush, give each crew a chunk of beef or pork, and plenty of hard tack. No breakfast this morning. It's the biggest cutting-in I ever had, and we've got to work sharp to save the blubber."

I did not realise at the beginning what a job we had before us, but the officers evidently did, and they sprang at the work like tigers at raw meat. Not a second was lost, and the crew was driven to its fullest capacity. Two of the boats stretched out to gather the more distant carcases, and the other two attended to those nearer by. As fast as we brought one to the Avola it was secured, and we veered off after

another at top speed. Fortunately ten of our victims lay within a quarter mile of the ship. The other five had spread out in their dying convulsions, and were at different points of the compass, though within a mile and a half radius of the bark. The outlying boats got them together by the time we had brought the nearer ten alongside. As there was little chance of the Avola sailing down to those five in a light wind, and towing ten more, the four boats joined forces, and managed to yank them to the hawse hole by noon.

"Dinner, the port watch!" sung out the Old Man, as we came aboard. "Mr. Stoddard, get your tackles aloft, and see all clear to start cutting in. It's all hands on deck until this blubber is housed!"

The lucky port watch went below for its meal, and we of the almost famished starboard gang got the tackles up, and the cutting stage rigged. By that time the port watch was back, and we had an opportunity to devour our salt horse. Twenty minutes were all that were allowed, and Stoddard stood at the scuttle as the last second expired. Pans were stowed away unwashed, and the men were at the windlass before he had a chance to open his lips. He did

not need to, for they saw he meant business, and the burly second mate was not a good man to keep waiting when important work was going forward.

Uncle Zene had his sleeves rolled up, and was the first man on the cutting stage with a spade. The Old Man could work too, and in a jiffy he had a section spaded loose, and called out:

"Hook!"

There were three other boatsteerers, and all pretty lively fellows, but Long Island Ned was the first down on that whale, hook in hand:

"All ready, sir!" I said, as I passed it through the hole in the blubber.

"Heave away!" he called to the windlass hands.

"Make a noise there! Let us know you're on deck!" he added.

At this Jonas piped up with:

"Oh, a bully boat, and a bully crew,"

Chorus:

"High-o-o, high-o-o!"

Jonas:

"And the captain, he's a bully, too!"

Chorus:

"High-o-o, high-o-o, hay!"

I don't know whether Jonas had any intention in his chantey, but I certainly agreed if it was meant to describe Uncle Zene.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THAT affair of oil was like a battle. The officers sprang at their work, and urged the crew on with a fierce alacrity that made the dullest foremast hand move with some of the spirit that drove the after gang. Whale after whale was stripped of its blubber, and its carcase turned adrift as another was warped up under the cutting stage. The Old Man and brawny Joe Stoddard, the latter now stripped to the waist, leaned over the life line and cut and hacked with incredible fury, and the tackles creaked with the weight of the ascending blanket strip, while the windlass brakes went clink-clank to the chantey of Jonas.

"Two blocks!"

A boatsteerer was there like lightning; the boarding knife severed the strip, and while it swung inboard the next one started to the masthead to the tune of clink-clank. There was too much blubber on hand and in sight to pursue ordinary methods. The main hatch was

broken open, and the blankets went below until we had more time to attend to them. This desperate battle was being fought out for the purpose of getting that oil-bearing coat off the whales, and where it would not blast.

All count of time was lost. The bell did not tap unless one of the officers happened to think of it. Eight bells, the beginning of the dog-watches was not even announced, and I don't believe a soul thought of it. At four bells, six o'clock, we had four stripped. Their heads were moored astern. We had not room for them on deck, and anyhow their more unctuous blubber would not blast like the tougher envelopment of their bodies that resolved itself into india rubber through the action of the sun and air.

"Supper, the starboard watch!" yelled Slush, coming from his galley laden with the grub kids for the forward gang.

"Supper, captain," announced the little steward, politely.

The Old Man handed his spade to the first mate. He had wielded it five weary hours with a cunning and energy that would have knighted a hero of old who so worthily did his *devoir* on the field of battle.

All night we toiled, and not one of the ship's company closed an eye in sleep. The crew were still cheerful and in good condition, while the after-gang, upheld by a higher energy, had not abated a jot of their superb vigor.

When we ate breakfast nine of the whales were cut-in. The ship was a reeking, bloody, greasy shambles; the air was filled with ravenous, screaming sea birds, and the numberless sharks in the sea fought over the feast we were providing as fierce curs wrangle over a bone.

Twenty minutes for breakfast, and we turned to. I began to feel that it would not be unpleasant to sit down and rest, but I looked at Uncle Zene, who momentarily unoccupied, paced the quarter with the swift intensity of a young athlete, and told myself I was only lazy.

There being almost no wind the wheel was lashed amidships, and saved a man for the real work. Only one masthead lookout went aloft, and he at the main. Everything was concentred on getting that blubber aboard. Eleven whales cut in at noon, and the four that bobbed in the sea awaiting our ministrations looked to be the biggest of the whole bunch. But there was not a word of grumble, though

perhaps all did not move so alertly as at the beginning. And then came a thunder bolt out of a clear sky!

"There she blows! There she blows! There she blows!" from the masthead.

"What do you make of 'em, sir?" hailed Uncle Zene.

"A school of sperm whales a mile and a half on the port bow, sir!"

"Aye, aye." The Old Man considered the news a moment. Then, "Lower away the waist and starboard boats!"

Thank heaven mine was the waist boat! Anything to vary the monotony, but I could see we were laying up more trouble for ourselves, and if we were to add a few more dead whales to those four already lying by the Avola, it was an even chance if we'd ever get through the job of cutting them in and trying them out. But Stoddard seemed to have taken a fresh hold on life as he gripped the steering oar, and he called to me with a grin:

"This will take six months off the length of the voyage, *you blasted fool!* The girls of New Bedford have got hold of the old Avola's tow rope, I guess."

I hadn't thought of taking this view of it,

and it did hearten me some. We pulled away after the school as if we had slept our usual time the night before. A change of occupation is mighty recuperative, and then the second mate's steel gray eyes had a glint in them that made one feel he was apt to do something uncomfortable if we did not meet his expectations.

We reached the whales, and so did the starboard boat. They were tame and easy to get at, and Stoddard and Morrison were the very men to take advantage of their opportunities. The result was that long after midnight we came alongside the Avola with a fresh bunch of six to take the place of those the shipkeepers had disposed of during our absence. The fires had been started while we were away, and the roar of the flames, and clatter of the mincing machine were added to the clink-clank of the never-ceasing windlass brakes.

Slush gave us something to eat, and we went to work again. We had now been at it without a break nearly thirty-six hours, and my muscles ached, and the small of my back felt as if somebody had been hammering it with a belaying pin. As I was young and strong, it is probable most of my shipmates felt somewhat as I did, but I failed to see any indication of the

fact in the mien of the after-gang. Their jaws were set pretty tight, and when they spoke they evidently meant what they said, but they worked with a fiercer determination than ever, and scorned to hang out any signals of distress. Uncle Zene carried the banner. There was no need for him to do a lick of work, and if he had seen fit he could have been in his bunk and asleep, but he was here, and there, and everywhere a hand could help, alert as a boy, and a cheerful grin on his withered phiz that somehow put heart into each one it confronted. And when there was no place for him to lend a hand, he skipped up and down that quarter of his like a six-day pedestrian, and I'd back him with my lay to have beaten the most of them out.

We pegged along somehow the balance of the night. There was a big copper of strong coffee kept hot in the galley, and at intervals Slush served it to the poor fellows at the windlass. It helped them out some, but they were nearly at the end of their endurance. These strong, muscular seamen were giving up. The spirit which sustained the Old Man, and through him, the whole after-gang, was not in

them. When their physical strength failed, they had no reserve of nerve force to fall back on.

Nevertheless the whales—now only four left —*had to be cut in,* and there was no one else to do it. At daybreak those dagoes hung over the windlass arms with their faces white and drawn, and although brave old Jonas—who was not one of them in make-up—started in with a chantey that would wake the dead, they failed to respond. Uncle Zene plunged into his after-cabin, and reappeared with a demijohn and a tin cup. This was something he kept for emergencies. It was a fiery rice brandy that would eat a hole in a stove lid. He gave each man at the brakes a brimming cup—it must have held a half pint. They took it gratefully, and without winking. In a moment the potent spirit coursed through their veins, and put some vim in them, but the dose had to be repeated more than once. They were nearly dead with fatigue and want of rest. At the last Stoddard came forward, and shook them up. Two that fairly went to sleep on the brake-handle he seized, one in each strong fist, and knocked their heads together until they screamed, and

begged for mercy. When he did let up they went to work as if they were thoroughly refreshed. It did more good than the Old Man's alcohol, for the portion allotted those two invigorated all the rest. He made them work as a horse does under the lash.

At noon that day the last carcase was cast adrift. We had been at the task sixty hours on end—without a wink of sleep, or a moment's rest. When the cook staggered to the forecastle scuttle with the mess kid for the watch, the captain said:

"The port watch eat, and turn in four hours!"

But the kid stood where Slush left it, and those men tumbled head first into their bunks, greasy clothing and all, and were snoring before they had pulled their legs after them. We of the starboard gang had four more weary hours of it, so the crew ate the dinner scorned by the others who could get the more needed sleep, and tried to believe it was a square deal.

Our turn came at last, as all things do. The port watch stumbled on deck at eight bells (four o'clock) more dead than alive. They had not had half their sleep out, and did not

realize that what they had, did them any good until they moved around, and got their benumbed faculties again awake.

Morrison and I took the try pots when we turned out later, and we kept the fires going so fiercely it was all we could do to ladle fast enough into the cooler to keep the oil from scorching—which I believe would have been a capital offense if Uncle Zene or the second mate had found it out. The hands were busy with short-handled spades getting the blanket strips into horse pieces, and the mincer was working like the fly wheel of a high pressure engine, reducing them to food for the try pots.

The Old Man was below hitting his pillow, and though every one on deck was industrious as the proverbial ant, it really seemed a peaceful scene in contrast with what we had passed through. Now Bungs' functions became important, and he began to earn the eightieth lay he had signed for. He was setting up casks as deftly and busily as though his life depended on it. The minute he had one hooped and tightened up it was filled from the cooler, and rolled one side, and up-ended so as to occupy less deck room. He had to keep close watch on these filled casks, for hot

oil is about the most confounded, penetrating fluid any one ever attempted to confine in a wooden receptacle. The first thing he knew two or three would begin to dribble a drop or two down the interstices between the staves. This was as significant as a crack in a dam, and he would spring on it with his hammer and caulking iron, and a bunch of flag—apparently dried bulrushes—and the way he'd walk into it was a beautiful sight to see. These great casks always littered the decks three or four days after an affair of oil, on account of this unfortunate proclivity; and even after they were stowed away, maybe in the lower hold, they were still liable to spring a leak, and give us a tremendous job to shift their bulky, unhandy weight to get at the recreant one, which was always in the most inaccessible place.

But I am getting away from the story of this one particular affair of oil. Oh, how the Avola did smell to heaven the morning of the fourth day after we had that star-light frolic among the whales! Not one of those blanket strips, of which a goodly store still remained between decks, would have been allowed within the limits of a self-respecting community on land. But thanks to our hurricane work in

getting them under cover they remained workable, and the spading, mincing, and trying out went on as relentlessly as Fate. After all, we had the best of it now. We were beginning to feel as if there were a prospect of our really getting rested after a time, and were standing oil watches, six hours on, and six hours off. I began to feel chipper, and then—

"There she blows! There she blows!"

The Old Man was certainly hooked up differently from the rest of us. He was on the head of a cask in the waist in a twinkle, and bellowing cheerfully to Mr. Haveron, who had raised them:

"What do you make of them, sir? It sounds like more luck!"

"Three sperm whales dead ahead. Three miles off!"

"Keep 'em in sight, sir, and sing out! We'll crawl up on 'em a bit. Stand by your boats, the port watch!"

That left us of the starboard draft shipkeepers, and sticking to the stinking blubber. The other task was preferable, but I was not a free agent, so I fired up. It seemed the easiest thing in the world to kill whales at this period. We sailed right up on those three, and Haveron

and Fletcher lowered, and in half an hour each was fast to a fifty-barrel cow. Uncle Zene was all smiles, and out came the cutting tackles and staging again, and by noon we had them alongside, and were at work on them.

And the next day before we had hoisted the last junk aboard we had raised them again, and the rain of good fortune continued. Two days after we got into a school. This time all four boats lowered, and we killed five. Stoddard said it was easy as eating pie, and he ought to know, for he was a Yank. For my part, it wasn't pie to me. I was getting pretty sick of whaling as an every day occupation. It was like the old times of a week back, when we got the fluke ropes of those five through the hawse hole. But when old Jonas started up—

"I'm agoin' to Looseyanna
For to hug my Maryanna!"

There was a perfect sea howl of a chorus, and every man of us realised that all this hard work was bringing us nearer home rapidly.

What I have given you is the history of the first week of one of the most successful catches ever made in the South Pacific in a given time. We continued on week after week until forty-

three days had elapsed, and during that entire period we had whales alongside or blubber on deck, and the try pots sizzling. Three times a week on an average, we raised whales. At the end of the season—I call the six weeks the season—we had stowed down seventeen hundred and sixty-five barrels of sperm oil. We were worn gaunt as grey-hounds, but fairly happy at that, for on the fiftieth day from the night we reckoned time, that of the Star-light Massacre, the Old Man came on deck, and said to the first mate:

"Set every thing alow and aloft, sir, and square away for Middle Harbor."

CHAPTER TWENTY

JONAS had told me shortly after we left New Bedford that it was just as well for us we were drafted into the starboard watch instead of the port, which was headed by Mr. Haveron the first mate. He was a man of domineering temper at the best of times, but during the six weeks past he had allowed his heat of mind to influence his actions to a greater degree than ordinarily. The intensity of the work, which had more or less set all our nerves on edge, had soured him so he could not always control himself.

For some reason the mate and I had never been friendly. Luckily we had not much to do with each other, for except during the dog watches when all hands were on deck, I never came in contact with him or under his authority. Latterly however, it seemed to me that he had begun to single me out to pick on. I had fallen in the habit of yarning, during the night watches, with Stoddard or Morrison on

the weather quarter deck. This was not exactly in accordance with whaleship etiquette, for strictly speaking, the boatsteerer's station is amidships, and he is only supposed to be on the quarter when called there by duty. Haveron had seen me there on several occasions when he had come on deck during his watch below, and each time he scowled in a way that made me perfectly aware how he felt in regard to my taking the liberty. But it seemed to me that if Stoddard and Morrison permitted the privilege it was none of his business, so I kept right on.

It was the same night we bore up for Middle Harbor that the unexpected climax came. I had been yarning with Tom by the binnacle, and had started to go forward. As I reached the mizzen rigging the mate, who had come on deck while my back was turned to the cabin companion-way, ran up behind me, and gave me a violent shove forward. I stumbled over the iron ring bolt at the corner of the main hatch, and went down on my face. I heard an inarticulate roar of rage as I fell, and recognized that I had been attacked. I also bumped my nose against the coaming of the hatch so the claret spurted. Altogether when I leaped

to my feet I was not so calm as usual. Haveron sprung at me again before I was fairly steady on my pins, and grabbed me fiercely by the throat. I could see by the moonlight that his face was red with fury as he yelled:

"You infernal foremast scrub, I'll teach you to keep your own place!"

If the affair had come up more gradually no doubt I should have acted with greater discretion, for I was perfectly aware that under no circumstances is it permissible on board ship to resist a superior officer. But as he began to dig his thumb into my windpipe I forgot everything else in the desire to get even with him, and swung in my right fist with a round arm blow that caught him on the edge of his cheek bone under the ear. He went over as limp as a dish rag, and his skull smacked hard against the same ring bolt as I had encountered in the first instance. Then he rolled over and lay with his face to the sky, and his arms outstretched.

The suddenness of his collapse startled me and springing forward I knelt beside him in sudden contrition, as Morrison and Stoddard came running to the scene.

"*You cussed fool!*" exclaimed the second mate. "You've killed him."

Morrison lifted the prostrate man's head, and felt the jagged wound in his skull the iron had made. Finally he said:

"He's all right. Knocked out, that's all! And served the crazy loon right. He was dead wrong."

"Belay your jaw tackle!" warned Stoddard in a swift whisper. "The old man is coming."

I arose to my feet, my anger all gone, and stood like a culprit awaiting condemnation. Uncle Zene saw at once something was amiss, and was among us like a flash. He took one glance at Haveron's white face, and turned on us like an old lion:

"What does this mean?" he demanded as he looked from one to the other. "Who has been man-handling my chief mate?"

His voice was ominous, and I could perceive the fingers of his right hand digging into the palm. It was a good deal like stepping up to the rack, but I managed to twist my lips into the answer:

"I struck him, sir. He—"

He had me by the throat as quickly as a wild cat, and his thumb began to bore in the sore

spot Haveron had already made. The next moment Stoddard and Morrison, wrought upon by their loyalty to me, did an unprecedented thing. They disregarded the sanctity of the captain's person, and seized his arm to free me from his fell grip:

"Let him explain, captain!" pleaded Stoddard.

"The darn fool deserved all he got, and more!" spluttered Tom, husky with earnestness.

The Old Man looked from one to the other in utter amazement. Such a happening as this had never come to him in all his years of seafaring. His chief mate knocked out and the second and fourth officers, both of whom he knew by long association to be loyal and upright men, endeavoring to save the offender from paying the penalty.

At this critical moment Haveron gave a faint sigh, and opened his eyes. The Old Man glared at me inquiringly again, and loosed his hold of my windpipe, for which I was devoutly thankful.

"Bring some water," he said curtly to Tom.

Morrison handed him the brimming dish from under the scuttle butt in an eye wink,

and the captain dashed it sharply in the mate's face. It brought him fully to his senses, and he rolled over and stiffly arose to his feet blinking at Captain Bourne. Then his eyes caught my face. The blood dashed back to his cheeks, and he cried:

"You miserable forecastle scum, I'll kill you for hitting me!"

His fist shot out. I was watching the changing expression of the captain's face, and received the vicious blow on the cheek, but it was the effort of a spent man and did not even stagger me. I side-stepped while Uncle Zene caught him by the shoulder, and said sharply:

"I am in charge of the deck, Mr. Haveron. Control yourself, and explain this matter."

Haveron gazed uncertainly into the Old Man's face which had regained its usual expression of cheerful authority. After a moment he regained his self-mastery. He turned again toward me with an expression of deadly malice, and started in:

"This Long Island Ned hangs out on the weather quarter most of the time in the night watches, and I am sorry to say the second and fourth mates seem to like it. If this goes on you will have him trying to bunk in the after

cabin with you, sir. I found him at the skylight to-night when I chanced to come on deck, and gave him a shove to send him amidships where he belongs. He struck me before I had an opportunity to defend myself, and I think he must have had a brass knuckle on his fist from the hole he made in my head."

This was a pretty specious story; but now he had had time to think Uncle Zene was far too sagacious to swallow it whole. He glanced at Stoddard and Morrison with a look of inquiry. Honest Joe's features were devoid of significance as those of a marble statue. It was evident the second mate did not intend to allow himself to be drawn into the matter any further than he had already gone.

"I was aft," he said shortly. "I do not know anything about it."

The captain turned to Tom. Morrison was mad all through with a generous anger on my behalf. Perhaps the fact that he had never gotten along well with Haveron had something to do with it also. So he looked Uncle Zene squarely in the eye, and spoke:

"Ned was aft yarning with me, sir. He often does, and I don't see the harm. As he was going forward the mate came up, and

pitched into him from behind before Ned knew he was there. He shoved Ned so he went down and cut his face. As Ned got up they locked horns, and Mr. Haveron got it good in the ear. He went down, and his head struck the ring bolt. There weren't no knuckles used, sir."

My eye never left the Old Man's face, and I saw its tension relax. Nevertheless I was bitterly surprised when he said to the fourth mate:

"Bring me a pair of handcuffs from the foot of my bunk in the after cabin. Mr. Haveron, return to your berth. I'll stand the middle watch, and you may have all night in to rest up."

Tom went off with less blitheness than usual to obey the order, but the mate stood in his tracks looking disappointed and rebellious:

"Go below, sir!"

This time Captain Bourne's tone was as imperative as the snapping of a gun lock. Haveron slowly turned on his heel, and walked aft. Morrison was coming out of the companionway as he entered it, and the two glared at each other, but passed in silence.

"Hold out your hands!" said Uncle Zene to me as he received the cuffs. "On a ship of

mine no one can strike my officer, and get away without punishment."

The humiliation of being bound like a common felon was so great that in spite of my genuine liking and respect for Uncle Zene I hesitated a breath before obeying. Like lightning came the crack of the whip again:

"Put out your hands!"

I mumbled:

"It is not fair, Captain Bourne."

And then I felt the cold iron encircle my wrists. The touch seemed to set my heart on fire, but I never dreamed of resisting the look in his steady gray eyes:

"I'll never forgive you for doing this to me," I said bitterly as he snapped the catches.

"I'll have to scrape along somehow even if you don't, Ned," he replied cheerfully.

As I could not see that my presence was needed any longer on deck, I retired to my bunk in the steerage and chewed the bitter cud in a wounded and indignant frame of mind. The injury was too recent, and I was too sore to see the affair from the Old Man's viewpoint. If I had been able to, I might have recognized that he could not range himself against his chief mate, and expect to maintain discipline on

board the Avola. I could only see the injustice of administering humiliating punishment to me when I was not to blame, and had simply defended myself against unwarranted attack.

I sat on my donkey, and tried to think the matter out fairly, but the more I turned it over in my mind the madder I got. I wound up finally by coming to the most foolish conclusion I could by any possibility arrive at. I resolved to desert from the Avola in Middle Harbor where, barring accidents, we would arrive the next day.

Some time before, Jonas who had been there, told me that there was a resident missionary stationed on Ascension, the island on which Middle Harbor was located. Also he said a supply schooner called the Morning Star was maintained by the Methodist Mission society, and made the round of the different missionary stations in the south seas annually to look after the needs of the teachers stationed in these wildernesses. I could either ship on, or stow away in this craft, and go in her to Honolulu, her home port.

At this point I recalled that the money due me on my lay must be nearly a thousand dollars. It seemed a pity to lose this important

sum, but I reflected that perhaps I could collect it by legal process from the owners of the ship; for was I not driven to desert by injustice and violent oppression?

I had been fiddling with my handcuffs as I pondered over these things, and my wrists being unusually large and bony, and my hands comparatively small, I discovered that with the loss of a little cuticle I could slip off the iron rings. This heartened me considerably, and I removed them. On second thought I put them on again to avoid detection. The process proved so painful I made up my mind not to disturb them again until they came off for good and all.

At four o'clock in the morning when the starboard watch came on duty again Tom Morrison slipped down into the steerage. I was mighty glad to see him, but I daresay I was not very demonstrative, for I had decided not to disclose my plans, and to act on my determination to desert the ship as soon as I found an opportunity. The fourth mate was full of sympathy though he did not seem to understand why I so bitterly resented being ironed.

"Why," said he, "they put me in a cell every time they get a chance at me when I am on

shore, and generally they have to put the cuffs on before they are able to get me there. You needn't take it so, Ned. The Old Man just had to do it! I'd let 'em iron me down to a ring bolt and keep me there all day for one chance to land on Haveron's mug as hard as you did. That was a dandy swing of yours!"

Altogether the warm-hearted fellow cheered me up, but I clung to my determination to leave the ship. He told me that we would get into the Harbor by noon if the wind held, and then reluctantly left me alone.

The little steward brought my breakfast and told me Mr. Haveron was on deck as lively as a cricket, although his head was bandaged and his jaw so swollen he could scarcely talk. This was some consolation, and I drank my coffee with relish.

Just before eight bells I heard the shrill hail of "Land Ho" come down from the masthead, and not long after dinner there was a bustle and commotion overhead. I knew we were entering the harbor, and preparing to come to an anchor. The rattle of the cable and plunge of the mudhook soon followed, and the steward came to tell me we had arrived in port.

Shortly Stoddard made his appearance with a

friendly grin on his big face and announced that the captain said I could come on deck if I wished, and that the irons would be taken off the next morning. I was glad of the opportunity to get a glimpse around so as to get my bearings in the daylight, but I thought to myself:

"The irons will come off before that, and there'll be no to-morrow morning for me on the Avola."

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

FAYAL JOE had the anchor watch from midnight until morning. I waited until he had struck the bell four times for two o'clock, and when I stole on deck ten minutes after he was nodding comfortably on the carpenter's bench aft of the try-works. I crept cautiously over the head of the ship and grasping the cable, noiselessly lowered myself to the surface of the water. My dunnage consisted of a pair of dungaree trousers and a hickory shirt, fastened on my shoulders with a piece of spun yarn.

It was dim starlight, and the bay was warm as new milk. I struck out in the direction of the shore with confidence and swam leisurely along until, on looking around, I found I could no longer see the hull or even the spars of the Avola. Then the situation suddenly became complicated and serious.

The bay is a large one, five or six miles long by two or three broad, and we had anchored

in the widest part on account of the holding ground being reputed better there. From the ship to the shore on the line I had intended to take was not more than a mile; but now I vividly realized I had nothing to guide me to the land, and that in the darkness I might circle around for hours until exhausted, or even go out to sea through the passage we had entered.

The thought terrified me and very naturally I began to forge ahead faster, and tire myself. In a few moments, however, I regained my presence of mind. I turned on my back and forced myself to consider the situation calmly. My thoughts ran something as follows:

"I am in a bad box, and had better have remained on board the Avola, but I cannot go back for it will be easier to find the shore of Middle Harbor than the ship. I know nothing of the tides and currents, and they may be sweeping me to sea at the present moment. Ha!!! The land breeze!"

Sure enough, that was my infallible guide. I had heard that it came up with the sinking sun, and blew freshly all night. I raised my body as high out of the water as possible, and it blew coolly on my right cheek. I set my face

to it, and lunged ahead with renewed assurance.

Then came doubt; it might change! Well, the hazard must be taken. Then something splashed in the water close at hand. My heart leaped to my throat, and paralysis chained my limbs. A shark? My God! But the terror passed, and the sound did not recur.

However, if a man wants to realize how helpless and timid he is when all the props of Civilization are removed, and he is brought naked close to the inexorable face of Nature solely dependent on himself, I advise him to try a similar experience to mine that night.

It seemed a lifetime, but I was probably no more than a half hour in the water. Where I at last struck the shore I found myself on a ragged coral reef, all sharp points and saw edges. My feet were toughened by going barefooted on the ship, but I speedily found I had made a grave error in not bringing a pair of shoes. Limping was my best gait, but I made the best speed I could force out of myself; for it seemed to me expedient to be out of sight of the Avola by daylight. I knew that the shore would be searched by keen eyes the min-

ute my absence from the berth in the steerage was discovered.

At last, with the abruptness peculiar to these latitudes, the sun leaped above the horizon. My good fortune had brought me into a deep, winding cove leading inland from the bay. It was densely wooded to within a hundred feet of the coral reef, and effectually screened me from the observation of any one on the Avola.

While I was satisfying myself that I was safe so far as the ship was concerned I heard a call from the upper end of the cove, and a native came out on the shore a quarter of a mile away, and made signals to me with his hand which I did not comprehend, but saw were friendly. I awaited him, and as he came closer recognized him as a man who had been on board the day before when I had come on deck by the captain's permission. In fact he had been consulted by the Old Man as to where to let go the anchor. He spoke a little English, as many Ponapians did, and eked out his meaning with wonderfully significant gestures.

Ono, as he called himself, at once grasped the idea that I was a runaway from the whaleship, and I gathered from him that desertions from visiting ships had occurred before within his

experience. At all events he was very friendly, and displayed a disposition to be helpful. He said he lived only a short distance away, and invited me cordially to come with him. I gladly accepted what I interpreted to be an offer of hospitality, and followed him half a mile inland to a grove where by a stream of water his habitation stood. It was a large hut with grass-thatched roof, and walls and partitions made of wattled screens of rattan or split bamboo. This gave free admission to the air, and protected the interior from the gaze of rude curiosity. Unpretending as it was, a dwelling more suited to the requirements of the climate could not have been devised.

Another man and two women in the house were greatly surprised to see me appear with Ono, but he explained to them in the Kanaka tongue, and it wound up by all of them embracing me with affectionate earnestness. This was not disagreeable, for the women were good to look upon.

After an excellent breakfast of baked pig and fruit, for which my swim and walk had given me a famous appetite, Ono and I held a consultation. I had entire confidence in him by this time, and we had become so well ac-

quainted that by the aid of the English he knew, the Kanaka I had picked up aboard ship, and his wonderfully expressive sign language we were able to understand each other well.

It appeared Ono was a progressive Ponapian. He knew the functions of pilots, and wished to qualify himself to act as one to the occasional vessels that visited the island. He was acquainted with the soundings, tides, currents, and rocks of the harbor, but lacked technical knowledge in the management of large craft. This he aimed to get through me, thus enabling him to extend his sphere of usefulness, and demand full pilotage fees from the incoming skippers.

The upshot of the conference was that he gladly agreed to assist me conceal myself until the Avola left Middle Harbor, and I on my side contracted to return the obligation by coaching him to a point in practical seamanship which would make him capable of conning a ship into the bay and bringing her to an anchor in her berth.

The arrangement suited me famously, and we had no trouble in a speedy agreement. He thought it wise, in view of the probability of Captain Bourne making a search for me ashore,

to send me to a village some fifteen miles in the interior of the island, where he had a brother living. He assured me of the best of treatment while I remained away, and immunity from the danger of recapture. On the departure of the Avola I was to return to his home, and live with him until I had taught him the elements of seamanship.

I thought it wise to start at once on our journey, for it was possible that a boat's crew looking for me might turn up at any moment. My feet were very sore but one of the women anointed them with palm oil, while the other manufactured a pair of rude sandals for me out of some thick, tough green leaves she plucked from a neighboring tree. These ministrations refreshed and comforted me, and I took the trail with my head up, and in the best of spirits.

Our path led through dense thickets and tropical forest, and towards the end we ascended a sharp elevation that brought us out on top of a mountain twelve or fifteen hundred feet in height. From the crest of this the prospect broadened, and beneath lay as beautiful a valley as that made immortal as the abode of Rasselas. Thickets of orange trees,

the broad-leaved banana, and the mango with its burnished foliage and grapelike clusters of green fruit, dotted its tranquil surface. The central point of the picture was a tiny native village over on the farther side of this Happy Valley. From our stand it resembled a group of toy houses except that it had not that stiff regularity in which toy artists seem to revel. Close to it, from the left, came bounding down the steep side of the cliff a lovely cataract, dashing and splintering its silvery column of water when it struck the base, into a million particles of spray which glittered and shone in the air like a diamond shower.

This was in front. As we looked back over the miles we had come, we could see the fierce tropical sunshine lying on the violet and gold bosom of the broad Pacific Ocean. Sentiment does not cut much of a figure in my make-up, but I certainly thought this a cut above life on the Avola.

And then Ono led me down to the village, and introduced me to his brother Tarnki. He was a pleasant looking savage, but had absolutely no English at his command. However, he soon understood the situation, and what he lacked in language he made up in good will.

Ono returned at once to the sea shore to keep an eye on the ship, and throw possible pursuers off the scent, and I settled down to life in this home in the wilderness.

If I should survive to the age of the patriarchs of the Old Testament, I can never forget the ten days I spent in this Ponape village. Tarnki was an elderly man, and had a daughter who contributed greatly to the attractions of the sojourn. She was a brown-skinned maiden of sixteen or seventeen years with a slim figure as perfect in proportion as a Grecian statue, and twinkling hands and feet of surpassing delicacy of mould. Her hair hung in wavy ringlets on her shoulders, and her glorious eyes were at one moment full of diabolical mischief, and the next tender as a fawn's.

To be sure our conversation was limited at the beginning because we neither could comprehend a word the other said, but the progress we made in the interchange of thought was truly astounding. Before three days had passed I had told her all my troubles, and she understood and bestowed on me a vivid sympathy that made me forget them. We spent most of our hours in alternately teaching each other Kanaka and English idioms. By the end

of the week she could conjugate the verb To Love in all its moods and tenses as perfectly, and as fervently as I could myself.

Tarnki gazed serenely on this idyl, and seemed to approve. Lona—that was her bewitching name—and I were soul mates, and I contentedly laid my plans to pass the rest of my existence in the Happy Valley. We even selected the spot where we should build our habitation. I recall there was a full moon on the night when we selected the site, and Lona lay in my arms with her head on my breast. As she lifted those wide dark eyes to mine, I forgot all civilization and even the old father and mother awaiting my return in America.

I have related this episode of my early life with perfect frankness, and as I look back upon it I can only acknowledge that I must have been temporarily insane at that period. Of course the girl was beautiful and I was fresh from a long and monotonous voyage, and tingling with what I held to be the injustice with which the captain had treated me in the affair with Mr. Haveron; but after all that was no excuse for my making such a sap-headed ass of myself as I proposed to.

Luckily I was saved from myself by an en-

tirely unexpected turn in the course of events. On the morning of the ninth day after I left the ship a man whom I did not know arrived from the coast with a message from Ono to Tarnki. It seemed both important and exciting, for Tarnki at once summoned Lona and me from our philandering to a conference. After a deal of trouble, with the aid of Lona they managed to make me understand that the Avola had left port, but seemed to be lying off shore. Ono had heard that Captain Bourne had sent for the chief of a tribe living on the other side of the harbor, with whom Tarnki's brother was not on friendly terms, and offered him the unheard-of bribe of a whole box of plug tobacco if he would send out his young men to find and capture the runaway sailor, Long Island Ned, and deliver him to the ship.

Ono felt certain the search was already under way, for a number of the most enterprising and active natives were absent from the rival village. Consequently he was very much concerned for my safety, and besought Tarnki to exercise the utmost vigilance to safeguard me from recapture. I am free to admit the news worried my prospective father-in-law more than it did Lona and me. In the first place

I had considerable confidence in my own prowess, and had no idea that even half a dozen of the natives would have any show with me if it came to a scrap, and secondly I doubted the Old Man's detaining the Avola for the sole purpose of getting hold of me again.

I was wrong, and it was not long before I found it out. The very next morning I went to a pool in the stream a quarter mile distant from the hut to take my usual morning bath. Lona was to meet me after my plunge, and we planned to return by a roundabout trail that would afford a pleasant stroll.

After I came out of the water I walked down the trail to where the other crossed it at right angles, and waved my hand gaily to my brown sweetheart who was awaiting me at the point of intersection. It was the last time I made any gay gestures for several days.

When I was about twenty yards from where Lona stood some one leaped upon my back, and at the same instant passed a sinewy arm slippery with cocoanut oil around my neck. Before I had time to realize the situation several natives slipped out of the thicket lining the path, and had me around the waist and by the ankles. I gave one a tremendous kick in

the pit of the stomach, and although I nearly broke my unprotected big toe in the effort, I was overjoyed to see him fall back roaring with pain. I managed to strike one of the others in the mouth and knock some of his white teeth down his throat, and then I went down with the whole bunch on top of me.

Of course I fought and struggled to the best of my ability, but those despised natives were astoundingly strong, and every one seemed to be freshly smeared with oil, and their carcases were as greasy as the pigs boys try to catch in Irish fairs. I could not get hold of them, and they hugged me so closely that my fists were useless. The upshot was that in two minutes they had me tied fast, hand and foot, so tight that the cocoa husk twine cut into my hide until it brought the blood.

As they raised me panting and breathless to my feet I saw Lona with the tears running down her cheeks, and wringing her tiny hands helplessly. When she met my gaze she gave a scream that woke the echoes of the hills, and sped down the trail to the village swiftly as an arrow in its flight. That was the last time I ever saw the dear girl.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THOSE savages certainly were experts in the line of business they had adopted. First they loosened the cords which bound my ankles until I had sufficient liberty to take a free stride. Then they put two arrangements I may call halters, for lack of a better name, around my neck. One of them took an end and started toward Middle Harbor; another took the second and trailed on behind. They had me! There was no doubt of the fact. If I bolted ahead, the one behind yanked me up. And if I hung back the husky devil in front nearly jerked my head off. If I tried it sidewise, they both pulled at once and it hurt sorely.

It was a pretty bitter pill to swallow, but I made up my mind I had better accept the situation with the best grace possible. So I smiled on my captors, and conversed with them to the best of my ability. This change in my demeanor pleased them, and as soon as they became convinced that I would give them no more

trouble they took the lashings off my ankles, and the halters from my neck, with the result of greatly increasing my comfort.

There was evidently no chance of escape, and I resigned myself to my fate. What chiefly troubled me was the consideration of what would happen when I got on board the Avola again. It was not so much the idea of the punishment I might receive for deserting the ship. I could stand that, but I had a notion that Stoddard and Morrison would withdraw their friendship because I had been so mad as to run away. Of course I anticipated being broken from my rank as boatsteerer, and sent back to the forecastle. This, I reflected, would please Haveron and give him a chance to abuse me all he wished. In any case, I determined the first mate should not get off so easily the next time he tackled me.

Ono had told me the Happy Valley was fifteen miles from the Harbor, but it seemed double that distance on the return journey. I had adopted the native dress, and had no covering on my shoulders when I was captured. The sun burned them painfully and they were one huge blister at the end of a couple of hours. Everything comes to an end, however, and

about one o'clock we arrived at the point of the headland by the entrance to the bay.

There was the Avola, sure enough, in the offing making short stretches under easy canvas. It was apparent to me at a glance that the captain was awaiting a signal from the shore. The leader of the band who had me in charge at once set about making a fire on the crest of the little promontory, and when he had the flames blazing merrily he dumped a quantity of wet leaves on them. There was little wind, and a tall column of dense smoke arose in the air.

The next instant I could see the bow of the Avola veer towards the shore, and her courses and to'gallant sails were sheeted home as she swept in towards the headland. She was not more than three miles off, and when she had covered half the distance they let her nose come up in the wind and laid her aback. Then a boat was lowered, and started for the shore.

As it neared the land I could see that the Old Man sat in the stern sheets, and Tom Morrison was pulling the harpooneer oar. A wave of something that was almost contrition and tenderness swept over me as I recognized their rugged, sea tanned faces, and of a sudden I

knew that these brave and loyal men were the kind I wanted to pass my life among, and that the last week of my life had been only a crazy dream.

Then the boat was run up on the beach, and Uncle Zene waded out, and came directly to where I was standing with my wrists bound. He grabbed a sheath knife from Tom's belt—the fourth mate alongside him—and said as he severed the cords:

"Ned, my boy, I'm glad I've got you again!"

"So am I, captain," I answered in a husky voice.

"Ha! Well, you're not such a cussed fool after all!" he exclaimed, but his tone was almost affectionate.

Tom could restrain himself no longer. He caught my limp hand in his great fist, and shouted:

"I ought to punch your head, you Long Island jackass, but I'll wait till I git you on board! Did you think the Old Man was going to let you beach-comb all your life on this blasted island, and never see New Bedford no more?"

This nearly broke me down, and I could only blink at them without a word to say for myself.

Then Uncle Zene took charge of matters again:

"Mr. Morrison," he said in his quarter deck manner, "let the crew of the boat have an hour's liberty, but keep them in hail. Ned and me are going to have a chat."

He led the way to a clump of cocoa palms, and sat down on a projecting root. I followed in silence, and stood before him heartily penitent and ashamed of myself:

"Now, Ned," he began, "we're ashore, and we'll play you're free and just as good a man as I am. On board ship, the captain has got to be the captain, and sometimes he does things he wouldn't under other circumstances. But he can't stop to explain his actions, or avoid hurting people's feelings. Once in a while a lunkhead comes along that can't understand this, and he is liable to suffer some, for discipline must be maintained aboard for the good and the safety of the whole ship's company. What's your idea about it?"

"I was dead wrong, captain," I mumbled. "Put the irons on again! I'll wear them as long as you say so without a murmur."

"I wish I could get out of it, Ned," he remarked thoughtfully. "But I reckon I'll have

to do that very thing. I ain't going to break you. Mr. Stoddard won't let me! He says he won't lower if I do."

The dear old boy grinned whimsically as he told this last, and then added:

"The captain's job ain't so easy—sometimes!"

I did not speak. I couldn't, and after a pause he resumed:

"One word about Mr. Haveron. He has his faults as a man. We all have, but he's a good officer. You must not come into collision with him while this voyage lasts. If you do, you'll get the worst end because I shall be behind him. Chew that, Ned, and swallow it down—even if it does taste nasty."

It gagged me a bit, I am free to confess, in spite of my unusual humility of mind. But by this time I had about come to the point when I could have laid my neck on the block if the Old Man had said so, and I finally raised my head, and replied:

"All right, sir, I've got it down. You shall not have any reason to complain of me."

His face softened, and I saw that he was satisfied.

"Well, then, that's settled," he concluded,

taking out his pipe and plug of tobacco. "Got any terbacker left?"

"I've been smoking this Kanaka stuff three days," I answered, greedily taking the extended plug.

"I am going to put the bracelets on you as soon as we go down to the boat, and you will have to stand it three days. Now go and see Morrison and Jonas."

This was his last word, and was accompanied with an amicable grin. I went down the trail after the others with my heart singing with joy. After all, it was no humiliation to wear handcuffs for a man like Uncle Zene. And I had not the remotest notion that he was going to let me be abused by the chief mate. To think of staunch old Joe Stoddard standing up for me like that! When I met Tom, who was waiting the conclusion of our talk a couple of ship lengths away, he caught me in a hug a polar bear would have envied, and growled:

"Well, you blasted son of a sea cook, I'm gladder to have you back than if we had another thousand barrels of oil under the hatches."

In all this time I had not once remembered forlorn Lona. Now when Tom and Jonas de-

manded an account of my adventure since I had been away from the Avola, she came to my mind for the first time. I had the sense not to tell my shipmates of what a sentimental idiot I had been. They possibly would not have comprehended my feelings in the matter, and much less sympathized with them. But they were vividly interested in my account of the circumstances of my capture by the natives, and were so wrought up by the indignity of the tying and haltering that I had some difficulty in preventing them from pitching into the savages then and there, and showing them the error of their ways.

It proved to be a fact that a box of tobacco had been put up as the reward for my recapture, and I saw it formally delivered over to the chief before we left. It came out of the captain's private stores, and I paid him for it later on. He was complimentary enough to tell me it was more than he would give up for most green hands, but he reckoned, on the whole, I was worth the price. It was gratifying to me to know exactly how much I was valued at.

Before the hands were summoned to shove the boat into the water, the Old Man produced

a pair of handcuffs from his pocket. I held out my wrists with very different feelings from those I endured the first time he had put them on me, and actually smiled genially into his face as he clicked them fast. I knew he was grieved at the necessity, and I am sure he felt ashamed in the depths of his honest heart.

The short pull to the ship was soon over, and as we came alongside the first mate stood at the rail to receive us. Uncle Zene observed affably as he stepped aboard:

"I've got him, sir."

Mr. Haveron gazed into my eyes with a face hard as marble when I followed, and sourly replied:

"He was just as well ashore!"

I never turned a hair though I saw it was evidently to be war to the knife on his part. The Old Man looked at him rather closely, but said nothing as he went below. Shortly the steward came up, and spoke to the mate. Although it was his watch on deck the latter went down the companion-steps. In ten minutes he returned looking red in the face and discomposed. I observed all this from the carpenter's bench where I was standing, and divined that Uncle Zene had been having a heart to heart

talk with him in the after cabin. I never heard the substance of their conversation, but for the whole of the period I remained on the Avola the chief mate never spoke to me again except to give me a needful order. Whatever had been the Old Man's argument in my behalf, it had been adequate.

Stoddard told me that night the captain had decided to leave the Carolines, and put in to Singapore to discharge our oil and refit for another year of sperm whaling.

The next morning the captain called the crew aft and lined them up on the lee quarter deck. He gave me a lecture before them all on the enormity of resisting an officer, and the equally heinous crime of desertion. He concluded his talk by saying that the fact that I had always been a willing and faithful man before induced him to pardon my transgressions. Then he unlocked the cuffs, and I was free.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

OUR course lay a little north of west, and took us through the very heart of the South Pacific. Until we came into the China sea we made land every day or two. We did not see any more whales during the passage, so that wonderful run of luck stopped as abruptly as it had descended on us. All hands, from the Old Man the whole way down the line, were in the blithest spirits. And no wonder! We had only hauled out from New Bedford dock two years before, and here we were with twenty-four hundred barrels of oil in the hold. Ordinarily a ship was not doing so ill if she gathered twelve or fourteen hundred in three years, and rightly enough, for even then the enterprise would pay about cent per cent to the capital invested. Those shrewd old Yankees did not pursue their arduous calling entirely on account of the romance involved in it. The pecuniary side appealed to them.

Twenty-four hundred barrels! Every man on board had his mind concentred on the

mathematical problem, more or less intricate to those unaccustomed to dealing with such high matters. This is the way it was figured out aft. Thirty-one an a half gallons to the barrel made our cargo amount to between seventy-five and seventy-six thousand gallons. Roughly speaking thirty per cent. of this was head oil, or contained a large proportion of spermaceti, making it more valuable. When we had left home, body oil had been quoted at $1.25 per gallon on a rising market, and with no probability of its ever going below that figure again. Here was over a hundred thousand dollars gross without even counting the added value of that head oil.

And Uncle Zene on the fifteenth lay! Jewhillikens! Didn't he have a right to feel good? Even the most humble of the foremast hands would possibly earn three or four hundred dollars for that two years' work. My own lay had been increased to the eightieth the day I was nominated Stoddard's boat-steerer. After the expenses of the voyage were paid back to the owners, together with the interest on their investment, I was entitled to a clear one-eightieth of all there was left. Perhaps eight hundred dollars! And then, by

Jove! There was the ambergris Uncle Zene had excavated! It might come to an entire thousand! And so on. Every man on the ship, I have no doubt, was wrapped up in the same kind of arithmetic.

It did not prevent the routine of the ship from going on. It rather oiled the wheels, so to speak. We were bound into a civilised port, at last, and the Avola had to be dressed in her best suit of clothes. The officers went at their task with their usual energy, and the staunch old bark was overhauled from stem to stern with all the scrupulous thoroughness that pertains to New England housekeeping.

Our poor, stained, dinted decks were holystoned from morn till dewy eve, until they were smooth as satin, and white as snow. The inboard paint was scrubbed with strong lye until our finger nails were burnt off, and the paint had disappeared. Then it was repainted, a virgin white, and thereafter woe to the unlucky devil of a foremast hand whom any officer caught accidentally or otherwise defacing or smutting its pure surface.

Then came the spars. No paint on them for ours! That slack method of doing things might appeal to the Lime-juicers, but a Yankee

skipper when he goes into port, wants his poles, from the biggest to the most tiny, to be scraped clean as a willow whistle, and shine with slush. So the boatswain's chairs were overhauled, and more manufactured for the exigencies of the occasion. For a time you could not raise your eyes without seeing men suspended aloft in all sorts of adventurous positions, and all scraping for their lives. After the scraping came the slush, and the cook—one of whose perquisites it was—watched the diminishing contents of the slush barrel with a thunder cloud on his bent brow.

After the spars more or less resembled a malacca cane in polish, the old, patched cruising sails came down one by one, and were replaced by new ones that looked like a snow bank in the air, and made us walk proudly because of our connection with this new Avola. Some we cut, fitted, and sewed ourselves, for your true sailor is a Jack of many trades, and unlike the landsman, an expert at all.

As nearly as I can remember the passage took four or five weeks, and I grew impatient of its length. At the last came a day when the wind entirely failed, and we drifted without steerage way. Apparently this happening had

been anticipated. The paint locker was ransacked, and the officers busily mixed oil, white lead, and pigment until they had sufficient in readiness for their purpose. Stages were hung over the rail, and a dozen brushes were at work making the outer garment of the vessel as spick and span as those we had already operated on. Many willing hands make light work. It did not take long, and before the day was over, the Avola was such a fine lady it was a wonder she did not blush at her reflection in the water.

"Land ho!"

This long-winded wail came from Jonas at the fore-royal in the morning watch the very next day. The Old Man was walking the quarter, and Mr. Stoddard stood at the waist in charge of the deck. He looked up with interest, and the captain stopped to say:

"That is the southermost point of India, sir. We're to the northward of our course, but we'll soon raise the island of Singapore, and if the breeze holds we'll lie at anchor in front of the city to-night."

In a short time we began to perceive we were in the vicinity of a large port. Little steamers, bigger ones that plied to distant

places, craft of every description under sail, from the clumsy Chinese junk to the trim Baltimore-built American clipper, and the hundred different types of oriental small craft, scooted by us with immense activity, or lay quietly at anchor.

We sailed proudly ahead, conscious of our good looks, for the Old Man intended to berth well in. The port captain, or some such gold-braided dignitary, boarded us, and the exchange of ceremonious greetings on the deck concluded, as I judge marine interviews usually do, with the clinking of glasses in the after cabin.

That Singapore official remained with us until we let go the mud hook, and he had an opportunity to see how a crew that had worked together two years handled an old-fashioned bark. I don't know much about the navy, though I hear they're mostly plumbers and gas fitters that do the work of the ships, but they would have to hustle to strip the canvas off in a more shipshape way than we did under the eyes of Uncle Zene, and that Singapore swell.

The Old Man went ashore with the port captain. He said he'd be back in an hour or so, and bring any mail there might be for the

ship. In the meanwhile sampans manned by coolies swarmed about the Avola laden with all sorts of things for sale. The keen rascals had scented the fact that we were likely customers, and tempted us with offers of every thing they could think of that was desirable to men off a long voyage. I had not seen the smallest coin of real money for two years, but now it was surprising to see the quantity produced from the tills of donkeys, or other secret places, and in a jiffy those Chinamen in the sampans were doing a thriving business forward and aft. One chap had a boat rigged as a butcher shop, and I sprung myself for what I suppose was buffalo beef, though it looked somewhat like a sirloin, and I was hungry, and in the mood to take chances. There were also outfitting boats with a selection of "store clothes," but I decided to hold my horses, and buy what I needed in that line ashore, though it would be necessary to descend on the city looking like a pauper's scarecrow. My decision was probably wise.

Captain Bourne returned at the time he had set. He had a bundle of mail in his hand as he came over the rail, and his gear was pretty well oiled. As his eyes met mine there was a

certain significance in the gaze I did not understand until later, but it prepared me for something unusual. He called the ship's company into the waist, and distributed the letters. The very last one he handed to me, and said quietly:

"When you have read that, Ned, come to the after cabin. I want to see you."

I knew the handwriting at a glance. The letter was from my Uncle Frank, and for a moment I feared to tear it open, thinking of all the possibilities of those two years I had been out of the world. I went into the vacant steerage, and read it. My father had fallen from a scaffold six months before, and received injuries which made it impossible for him ever to work again at his trade. He had been a moderately prosperous carpenter, and fortunately owned his home. He had always hitherto been able to look after himself and mother, and I had not contributed to the household expenses in five or six years, or since I came of age. Now they needed me, and said good old Uncle Frank:

"Don't let your heels slip in getting home, and bring what money you have along, for it's scarce this side of the water."

He had written through Woodward Brothers, on the off chance of catching me at Singapore.

My mind was made up before I reached the last page. I would ask Captain Bourne to discharge me here, and advance what he was able on my lay. That amount, and it ought to be a fairish lump, could go by mail. I would ship as able seaman, thank the Lord I could qualify, on any vessel I found going to a port near home. That would land me there with cash in my pocket, and I would buckle down in earnest to look after the old folks. I proceeded to the after cabin, letter in hand.

"I know all about it, Ned," said the Old Man. Your uncle told the whole trouble to Mr. Woodward, and the latter has written me to do what I think best about it. I've got the matter arranged shipshape in my head. In the first place, you will go ashore with me to-morrow, and I'll give you a draft on Woodward Brothers for one thousand dollars. That will be on account of your lay. If it happens to turn out less, you and I can fix it up. You can send that home to the Dad. Shut up! You wait a minute! The Queen, Captain Haviland, is waiting here to pick up a crew to run

down to Padang, on Sumatra, to load coffee for New York. I met Captain Haviland at my consignee's, and told him I had just the man he wanted to sail third mate with him. He needs one."

He ceased talking, and looked inquiringly at me as if he had been discussing some ordinary matter in an ordinary way. I was gulping, and trying to find a steady voice to tell him what I thought about his way of doing things. He saw my emotion, and gently shoved me to the companion-way steps:

"Go and turn in, Ned," he continued, "you want to do a little thinking about this news. Stand by to go ashore with me in the morning, and we'll see the consul, and get your discharge. Then we'll fix the other matters up."

I shook his hand silently, and went to my bunk. I was somewhat stunned by the suddenness of the affair, but I got some sleep after all, and turned out the next morning in pretty good shape.

We went ashore at the appointed time, and as it was still too early to find the consul, we called at the shipping office, where we met Captain Haviland. He was a red-headed, well-set-up man, with a deep blue eye that looked

as though there might be trouble at the bottom of it. There was, as I found later—but that's another story. He wanted me all right, and I agreed to sign up with him.

Then we went to the Consul, and I got my discharge. Here it is:

I, the undersigned, master of the Whaling barque "Avola" of New Bedford of 373 tons, register, owned by Woodward Brothers, herewith certify that Edward Hall mariner (green hand, and afterward boatsteerer), who was duly shipped at New Bedford, Mass., on the 20th day of November, 1870, and who was duly discharged by reason of mutual consent, by and before A. G. Spader, U. S. Consul at Singapore, is entitled as his share or lay, according to Shipping Articles signed by him, the said Edward Hall, to first one two hundredth, and later to one eightieth of twenty four hundred (2400) barrels of Sperm Oil caught from November 20th, 1870, to this day, less the sum of eighteen dollars ($18.00) for fitting and discharging ship, and I request that the owners of the said barque "Avola," of which I am Master, pay to him, the said Edward Hall, the

value of the share due him as above stated, less the eighteen dollars as stated.

ZENAS E. BOURNE,
Master of the Whaling barque Avola.
SINGAPORE, INDIA, *October* 5th, 1872.

I freely and fully accept the settlement of my lay and share as above stated by Zenas E. Bourne, Master. EDWARD HALL.

The above acknowledgment and settlement was signed, and settled before me, the undersigned, Consul of the United States of America at Singapore, and the dependencies thereof on the fifth day of October 1872.

A. G. SPADER,
U. S. Consul.

THE END

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